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Epidemiología Clínica:

Una Herramienta Fundamental en la Práctica Médica

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Epidemiología Clínica: Una Herramienta Fundamental en la Práctica Médica

Rosa Pérez Perdomo MD, PhD
Cynthia Pérez Cardona Ms, PhD (Editorialista invitada)

En 1969, David Sackett denominó la epidemiología clínica como una disciplina que aplica el método epidemiológico y el método biométrico al estudio de los procesos de diagnóstico, tratamiento y pronóstico con el fin de lograr un mejoramiento de la salud y promover así el avance del conocimiento que se aproxime más a la realidad (1). Recientemente, la epidemiología clínica ha sido definida como la ciencia de hacer predicciones acerca de un paciente a través de la contabilidad de eventos clínicos en pacientes similares, usando el método científico para estudiar grupos de pacientes con el fin de verificar que la predicción es certera (2,3).

Al analizar el término epidemiología clínica se observa que se deriva de dos disciplinas: la medicina clínica y la epidemiología. Es clínica porque pretende contestar preguntas relacionadas al manejo del paciente y guiar las decisiones de dicho tratamiento basado en la mejor evidencia. Es epidemiología porque el cuidado del paciente individual se visualiza dentro del contexto de una población de la cual el paciente es un miembro (3).

Existen varias razones para reconocer la epidemiología como una disciplina necesaria para el clínico. Antecedentes históricos del campo de la epidemiología han evidenciado las repercusiones importantes que ha tenido esta disciplina en la práctica clínica. Investigaciones sobre el cólera, la pelagra, las caries, la enfermedad cardiovascular, el cáncer pulmonar, el síndrome del choque tóxico y el SIDA son algunos de los ejemplos clásicos que han demostrado la aplicación de la epidemiología en la investigación etiológica. Por otro lado, las variaciones y los cambios en el tipo de cuidado médico, el alza en costos, el surgimiento de nuevas enfermedades, el resurgimiento de enfer-

medades previamente controladas, la resistencia de microorganismos a medicamentos, los efectos a corto y largo plazo de exposiciones ambientales, entre otras, hacen imperante conducir investigaciones con métodos rigurosos que puedan proveer evidencia que guíe la toma de decisiones clínicas. Esta disciplina abarca diversas áreas de interés: estudiar el curso natural de la enfermedad, evaluar e interpretar las pruebas diagnósticas, seleccionar la secuencia lógica en la estrategia diagnóstica, juzgar objetivamente los resultados de la terapia seleccionada, emitir pronósticos con bases más sólidas, comprender y analizar críticamente los artículos publicados en las revistas científicas y traducir los resultados de la literatura científica a la atención de sus pacientes.

Durante los últimos años, las agencias acreditadoras de las escuelas de medicina han hecho compulsorias la realización y la presentación de proyectos de investigación a médicos en adiestramiento en los programas de residencia en la Isla. Este requisito ha creado una nueva visión sobre la necesidad de adiestrar a los médicos residentes para que sean capaces de desarrollar y conducir proyectos de investigación. Sin embargo, para obtener resultados que tengan validez interna y externa es imperativo tener los conocimientos suficientes para seleccionar el diseño de estudio más adecuado que conteste su pregunta de investigación. Aun contando con un equipo de asesores en dichas áreas, el investigador debe entender la metodología y los resultados del estudio para poder defender con argumentos sólidos las interrogantes que surjan en cualquier foro de investigación.

Al final de la década pasada, Wulff y colegas realizaron un estudio en Dinamarca para determinar el nivel de conocimiento de estadística de los médicos

graduados. Utilizando una muestra aleatoria de 148 médicos se observó que aproximadamente el 70% de los médicos tenían conocimientos limitados en investigación que les impedían detectar la inadecuación de un diseño o un análisis estadístico en un estudio o no eran capaces de interpretar los resultados correctamente. Conceptos básicos tales como la desviación estándar, el error estándar, el intervalo de confianza, el coeficiente de correlación y el valor de p, términos que se utilizan constantemente en la literatura científica, no fueron interpretados correctamente (4). No encontramos estudios recientes que evidencien que esta situación ha cambiado.

En Puerto Rico existe mucha investigación en el área de ciencias básicas. Sin embargo, existe una gran necesidad de ampliar el campo de la investigación clínico-epidemiológica. A pesar de todo el conocimiento adquirido en las últimas décadas o siglos sobre la epidemiología de enfermedades infecciosas y crónicas, existe mucha necesidad de describir el comportamiento de estas enfermedades en nuestra comunidad puertorriqueña. El conocimiento generado de estudios epidemiológicos de naturaleza descriptiva nos ayudará a conocer el comportamiento de estas enfermedades en grupos específicos o en áreas geográficas particulares. Estos resultados, a su vez, servirán de base para formular hipótesis que puedan ser evaluadas en estudios epidemiológicos de naturaleza analítica. La evidencia obtenida de dichos estudios epidemiológicos es determinante en la formulación de política pública favorable a la salud de nuestro país.

A través de una nueva sección en el boletín, nos proponemos publicar artículos de temas relacionados a la investigación clínica que aporten a los conocimientos básicos expresados en una forma sencilla y clara. Esperamos motivar la adquisición de conocimientos en esta área. Temas tales como diseños de estudios epidemiológicos, medidas de frecuencia de morbilidad y mortalidad, y conceptos básicos de estadística serán cubiertos en las próximas ediciones. Además, esperamos poder conocer las áreas de interés de nuestros lectores.

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Mensaje:

del Presidente

Luis A. Parés Martínez, M.D.



La medicina ante el nuevo milenio

Con este título ofrecemos la cuarta y última jornada científica de la AMPR para éste milenio. El concepto de la proyección de este nos lleva a hacer unas reflexiones de lo que ha sido la investigación científica hasta ahora y lo que vislumbramos se proyecta hacia el nuevo milenio.

A nivel mundial la investigación científica ha sido definitivamente excelente. Recientemente se ha publicado el resultado de una investigación que descifra los secretos del cromosoma 22, con las implicaciones que conlleva este significativo resultado en el futuro inmediato del tratamiento y prevención de un sinnúmero de condiciones y enfermedades.

En el ámbito local, en Puerto Rico, el proceso o ejercicio de investigación científica, a todos los niveles, desde básica, hasta clínica y experimental, definitivamente necesita de mayores estímulos para su continuo desarrollo y progreso. La industria farmacéutica, que en nuestra isla se encuentra representada por las más grandes compañías mundiales, tanto en el sector manufacturero como de distribución mundial ha comenzado a interesarse en incentivar a nuestros investigadores.

La cantera de talentos en nuestra isla es de las más altas calificaciones, pero desafortunadamente, se nos van a centros de investigación en Estados Unidos o ingresan a profesiones donde la investigación no está presente. Tenemos, pues, el problema aparentemente identificado. Las universidades en Puerto Rico, han tenido históricamente la responsabilidad de promover

la investigación científica en sus diferentes escuelas de medicina y facultades de ciencias. La creación de proyectos investigativos requiere una formación desde la base del estudiante, de manera que al llegar al ambiente universitario de educación superior, posea las herramientas básicas para el desarrollo de todo su potencial.

La Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico, desde la creación a principios de siglo de nuestro BOLETÍN MÉDICO, ha promovido la investigación y su difusión mundial a través de nuestro registro en el Index Medicus. Ha sido, pues, piedra angular para el conocimiento local e internacional del quehacer científico puertorriqueño.

En nuestro ejemplar anterior les llevamos lo que consideramos será un ejemplar para la historia de las publicaciones científicas en Puerto Rico. Con el tema del SIDA se hizo una actualización en todos sus aspectos incluyendo una actualización de la enfermedad, y proyectos investigativos locales, reflejando la realidad de ésta en nuestro medio ambiente.

Puerto Rico necesita seguir cultivando la investigación clínica y básica, y en el Boletín de la AMPR y en las actividades de Educación Médica Continua de nuestra institución el investigador encontrará un foro de responsabilidad y solvencia intelectual donde publicar los hallazgos y las contribuciones para la **medicina ante el nuevo milenio.**

Estudios Originales:

Death as a Sentinel Event: The Mortality Experience of Puerto Ricans in the United States

Annette B. Ramírez de Arellano, DrPH

Summary: The mortality data for 1996 and 1997 reveal that Puerto Ricans in the United States lag behind other Hispanics in terms of age-adjusted death rates. The better health status of Cubans in the United States can be explained by their immigration history and more favorable socio-economic conditions. The greater mortality risks of mainland Puerto Ricans compared to Mexican-Americans is more difficult to explain. While Puerto Ricans have more entitlements, higher incomes, and more education than their Mexican counterparts, the Mexicans have higher levels of employment and more stable families, indicators which apparently affect the relative risk of death. The data also show that, of all the Hispanic subgroups, the Puerto Ricans exhibit the most marked gender differentials, mainland Puerto Rican men being significantly more at risk than females. Finally, the data on infant mortality show that babies born to Puerto Rican women are less likely to survive their first year of life than infants born to women of other Hispanic origins. Each of these indicators suggests the greater vulnerability of mainland Puerto Ricans and confirms the disadvantaged status of this population vis-à-vis other groups.

Vital statistics are "vital" in both senses of the word. First, they reflect life events, gathering data on births, deaths, marriages, and divorces. Secondly, they are of utmost importance in depicting the health status of populations. In the absence of such data, we have no common vocabulary, no benchmarks, and no way to compare populations. Vital statistics thus provide the basis for designing health-promoting strategies and for tracking progress over time.

Until recently, there were scant data on the health of Puerto Ricans in the United States. While 43.5% of the Puerto Rican population currently resides within the United States (1), this population was systematically excluded from most statistical compendia in both the island and the United States. The health data on this population was most often relegated to the residual category "other," allowing neither an accurate epidemiological picture nor an indication of the particular risks and conditions to which this population was exposed.

This situation began to change in the 1980s. The Hispanic Health and Nutrition Examination Survey

(HHANES) of 1982-1984 employed a probability sample of three subgroups of the population living in selected areas of the United States. This survey uncovered marked heterogeneity in the health status, behaviors, and access to care of the different subpopulations (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc.) under the Hispanic rubric, and revealed that areas of great need were being masked by inappropriate aggregations (2). This and other initiatives have legitimized the use of place-of-origin as a useful variable for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, and led to changes in the way data are gathered and published.

Starting in 1989, the Vital Statistics of the United States began publishing data broken down by origin, age, and gender. As a result, it is now possible to examine the experience of the Puerto Rican population in the United States. This article will therefore focus on the mortality experience of this population, using the data for 1996 and 1997, the most recent vital statistics which are currently available (3).

Three conclusions are inescapable from the available statistics. First, U.S. Puerto Ricans lag significantly behind other Hispanics in terms of health status as measured by mortality data. Secondly, there is a marked gender differential, males being at significantly greater risk than females. Third, the Puerto Ricans' disadvantaged health status begins *in utero*, with high risk mothers with late or no prenatal care having poor pregnancy outcomes which are in turn reflected in higher rates of infant mortality. Each of these conclusions deserves additional comment.

The Puerto Rican Lag

The Puerto Rican lag in health status, evident in the HHANES survey of 1982-84, is once again underlined in the 1997 data. The most recent vital statistics indicate that the age-adjusted death rate for the U.S. Hispanic population as a whole was 350.3 per 100,000 inhabitants, 27% lower than that for the white non-Hispanic population as a whole (479.1 per 100,000) (4). Although some of the apparent advantage of the Hispanic population is attributable to a statistical artifact [i.e., the fact that the "mortality of Hispanics is somewhat understated because of net

underreporting of Hispanic origin on the death certificate," (4)] there is still a real difference in the Hispanics' favorable experience. Among mainland Puerto Ricans, however, the age-adjusted death rate is 419.7 per 100,000, comparable to that for white non-Hispanics (424.3).

The gender breakdown found that Puerto Ricans of both sexes had the highest age-adjusted mortality of any Hispanic subgroup (4). The differential was particularly noticeable for males: Puerto Rican men die at a rate that is 1.25 times that for Hispanic males as a whole. For women, the corresponding ratio is 1.16 (5).

In order to begin to examine the causes for the disadvantage, it is useful to compare the Puerto Rican population with the two other specific subgroups for which the data are broken down, namely Cubans and Mexicans. The age-adjusted death rate for U.S. Puerto Ricans is almost 1.4 times that of their Cuban counterparts. This difference can be explained by indices related to the social determinants of health, most of which favor the Cubans. Cubans in the United States are predominantly those who emigrated in the early 1960s and their offspring. Because this migratory wave was spurred by politics rather than economic hardship, it was selective of those with social advantages. Largely white, educated, and middle-class, the Cuban community rose rapidly to establish itself in Florida as an economic and social force. In the words of one observer, "no group of newcomers in the United States had ever moved so quickly from penury to prosperity" (6). The Cubans' geographic concentration has also given this community an unusually strong political base, and hence greater access to the rewards of power, including access to health care. These advantages are reflected in their favorable mortality profile, which has been ascribed to its status as a transitional population which "has preserved the advantage of a low-mortality developing nation as exhibited by low death rates from degenerative causes such as cardiovascular disease and malignant neoplasms" (7). If this hypothesis is true, this population may lose its current advantages as it matures. If, however, greater education, higher incomes, and cultural cohesiveness continue to characterize Cubans in the U.S., this population may retain its favorable position relative not only to other Hispanics but to non-Hispanic whites as well.

The disadvantaged position of Puerto Ricans vis-a-vis Mexican-Americans is less easily explained. More subtle and complicated factors appear to be at work. At first blush, it would seem that, as citizens, Puerto Ricans would have an advantage over Mexican-Americans, some of whom are recent immigrants lacking health insurance and other entitlements (8). Moreover, some of the standard indicators of socio-

economic status (SES) favor the Puerto Rican population: Puerto Ricans as a whole have a higher level of educational attainment, higher median earnings, and a higher proportion of workers at the managerial and professional level than their Mexican-American counterparts (9).

These data, however, appear to be offset by more nuanced indicators which suggest that education, income, and occupational status may not tell the whole picture. Indeed, while Mexican-Americans may have less money, they may be experiencing less poverty as measured in terms of relative deprivation, marginalization, and disaffection. Mainland Puerto Ricans have higher unemployment, lower labor participation rates, lower family incomes, a higher proportion of persons living under the poverty rate, and more female heads of household than Mexican-Americans (10). These disadvantages appear to enhance their vulnerability to disease, ill health, and death. It is these characteristics that have led to mainland Puerto Ricans being seen as an "underclass" characterized by persistent poverty and geographic concentration, a situation in which deleterious and social circumstances overlap with personal and family disadvantages (11).

The pathways between the latter cluster of characteristics and high mortality are complex but have been amply documented. In addition to decreasing income, high unemployment and low labor participation limit the availability of health care, constrain access to social networks, and are associated with poor health practices including smoking, substance abuse, overeating, and lack of exercise (12). Moreover, they lead to powerlessness and a lack of self-efficacy which are not only demoralizing in themselves but also "reduce motivation to cope actively with problems" (13). Female heads of household are similarly disadvantaged because they most often reflect and refract an environment of family disruption, limited educational opportunities, and high welfare dependence. They also tend to live in neighborhoods which perpetuate these traits and trap them in a cycle of low achievement and poverty from which it is difficult to escape.

Gender Differences

The 1997 data also document the gender differential in the mortality experience of U.S. Puerto Ricans. While the male-to-female ratio of age-adjusted mortality is 1.6 for the United States as a whole and 1.7 among all Hispanics, it is over 1.8 for U.S. Puerto Ricans.

Previous analyses looking at years of potential life lost (YPLL), a measure of premature mortality, in 1989 found that mainland Puerto Rican males, constituting 48.8% of the U.S. Puerto Rican population, accounted for 61.1% of all deaths and 73.0% of all YPLL reported

that year (14). While all 12 leading causes of death had a greater impact on men, the sex differential was particularly marked for four causes of death: suicide, homicide and legal intervention, HIV infection, and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis (15). Because these causes are associated with marginalization and substance abuse, they therefore reflect the ultimate effects of discrimination, uprootedness, and poverty. In a patriarchal culture in which men are expected to provide for their families, it is not surprising that these adverse social conditions have taken a greater toll on the male segment of the U.S. Puerto Rican population.

The sex differential evident in the data for 1997 is significantly lower than that for the previous year, when the relative risk of death for mainland Puerto Rican males was 2.1 times that for their female counterparts. The abrupt reduction in the mortality differential by sex is explained by the dramatic decrease which occurred in 1996-1997 in two causes of death which affect primarily men: HIV infection and homicides. Nationally, deaths due to HIV / AIDS declined by fully 47.7%, while the death rate for homicide dropped 5.9% (16). While there is some evidence that indicates that these declines have affected all population subgroups, the impact has not been uniform across ethnicities. Even when the most disadvantaged neighborhoods have experienced the steepest decreases in the homicide rates (17), Puerto Rican men apparently continue to have a higher mortality risk than other males.

Trends in these two leading causes of death need to be monitored in order to assess their future impact on Puerto Rican males. If deaths due to homicide and AIDS are averted altogether, then the mortality risk of this population should decline significantly. If, however, Puerto Rican males survive these two causes of premature death only to fall prey to other risks, the gains may be ephemeral.

Infant Mortality

The most recent data on infant mortality, which are from 1996, similarly reveal that U.S. Puerto Ricans are at a disadvantage compared to other Hispanic populations. While Puerto Rican infants in the United States died at the rate of 7.8 for every 1000 live births in 1996, the corresponding rate was 5.9 for all U. S. Hispanic infants. When the overall infant mortality rate is broken down into the neonatal and the postneonatal period, the differential is particularly marked for the neonatal period (the first 27 days of life): Puerto Rican neonates died at the rate of 5.1 per 1000 births, compared to 3.8 for Hispanic neonates as a whole (18). Again, Puerto Ricans fare worse than their Mexican and Cuban counterparts, a finding that has held true as long as the data have been disaggregated by subgroup (19). Deaths occurring during the first four

weeks of life are predominantly due to endogenous or internal causes, including genetic factors associated with pregnancy and the birth process. Why Puerto Rican mothers are at greater risk of poor pregnancy outcomes is a question requiring further study.

These data are particularly disturbing for several reasons. First, infant mortality has been seen as a sensitive indicator of a population's health status and general welfare. Indeed, international rankings based on infant mortality are often used as proxies of a nation's level of development (20). In addition, differences in infant mortality reflect inequities that begin at birth and may have longitudinal implications. David Williams has suggested that early deficits in preventive care "may set in motion irreversible processes that will not disappear even if this initial cause is subsequently removed" (21). Finally, the past 8 years have seen a variety of initiatives to ensure early prenatal care. These efforts have focused on communities which lag in this respect, and have been designed to produce better pregnancy outcomes. Those areas or populations which continue to show inadequate progress in producing healthy babies are therefore those that are particularly hard to reach or whose life circumstances make them less receptive to purely medical interventions. To the extent that Puerto Rican mothers fall into this category, progress will depend on altering more fundamental factors than access to care.

Conclusions

Death has been called the ultimate sentinel event, alerting health practitioners, planners and policy-makers that something may be wrong with the body politic. The most recent mortality data for U.S. Puerto Ricans raise concerns and reveal an aspect of the Puerto Rican population in the United States that has received relatively little attention. While the media have highlighted the success of a handful of individuals, primarily from the entertainment industry, little has been written about the plight of the collectivity. Yet the data are too consistent over time and by indicator to represent an anomaly, and should alert us to the health vulnerabilities of the almost 3 million Puerto Ricans in the United States.

The data also suggest the extent to which the conventional expectations of the acculturation process have gone awry in the case of U.S. Puerto Ricans. Traditionally, acculturation was seen as a process of individual and group improvement. It was therefore anticipated that acculturation would trigger a number of favorable changes, including the acquisition of a new language, a higher educational level, and an increase in income-earning capacity, and that these would in turn would have a salutary effect on the population's well-being. For the Puerto Ricans

residing in the United States, however, acculturation has yielded mixed results. The process has meant coping with racial prejudice and discrimination, adopting others' definitions of the self, negotiating an often hostile environment, and engaging in a variety of hazardous health practices that take their toll in terms of premature death.

The determinants of death are difficult to pinpoint for any one population. Comparative data are therefore useful in helping to disentangle the effects of genetics, health practices, and access to care. The data for Puerto Ricans in the United States are of interest because they can be compared with both the island population and with other Hispanic groups in the U.S. While we can only speculate on the reasons behind the statistics, they help us define an agenda for research and the delivery of care.

Resumen: Los datos de mortalidad para los años 1996 y 1997 revelan el rezago de la población puertorriqueña comparada con otros grupos hispanos en los Estados Unidos en términos de las tasas de mortalidad ajustadas por edad. El mejor estado de salud de la población cubana puede atribuírsele al historial de inmigración de este grupo y al nivel socio-económico más alto del cual goza esa población. La mortalidad más alta de los puertorriqueños comparada con los mexicanos es más difícil de explicar. Aunque los puertorriqueños cuentan con mayor acceso a beneficios, un mayor nivel de ingresos, y una escolaridad más alta que los mexicanos, estos últimos tienen una tasa de empleo más alta y una mayor proporción de familias intactas, indicadores que aparentemente protegen contra el riesgo de muerte. Las estadísticas también revelan que, entre los grupos hispanos, los puertorriqueños tienen la brecha más alta en mortalidad entre un sexo y otro, siendo los varones mucho más vulnerables que las hembras. Por último, los datos sobre mortalidad infantil indican que los bebés nacidos a madres puertorriqueñas tienen una menor probabilidad de sobrevivir su primer año de vida que los bebés nacidos a madres de otros grupos hispanos. Estos indicadores apuntan hacia una mayor vulnerabilidad de los puertorriqueños en los Estados Unidos y confirman la posición de desventaja de esta población comparada con otros grupos hispanos.

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Estudios Originales:

Estudio comparativo de indinavir versus ritonavir para evaluar el desarrollo de enfermedades oportunistas en pacientes adultos de SIDA

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Abstract: *This observational study compared the probability of developing the first opportunistic infection among AIDS adult patients attending the "Programa SIDA de San Juan" who received either indinavir plus zidovudine and lamivudine (n=45) or ritonavir plus zidovudine and lamivudine (n=16) between August 1, 1996 and July 31, 1997. No significant differences were observed with respect to appearance of an opportunistic infection, increase in CD4 levels and decrease in viral load between both groups during the study period. However, an increased probability of being free of opportunistic infection after 10 months was observed for the indinavir group ($p > 0.05$). In addition, the probability of changing or interrupting prescribed therapy was 2 times higher for patients under ritonavir ($p < 0.05$). These results suggest the need to confirm these findings in a larger group of patients in a controlled clinical trial and to assess the short-term and long-term effects of both therapies among Puerto Rican AIDS patients.*

Introducción

El uso de triples terapias antiretrovirales que generalmente involucra la combinación de dos análogos de nucleósidos y un inhibidor de proteasa del VIH se ha convertido en el tratamiento estándar recomendado para personas infectadas con el VIH. El uso de estos regímenes se han asociado a una reducción dramática en la incidencia de enfermedad oportunista y mortalidad (1-6). Además, se han asociado a una disminución en la carga viral y un aumento en los CD4 (7-11). Sin embargo, la terapia con inhibidores de proteasa se ha vinculado con una variedad de efectos adversos, afectando así la adherencia del paciente y por consiguiente la eficacia del medicamento (1, 12-18).

Ensayos clínicos que han comparado la eficacia y la tolerabilidad de inhibidores de proteasa entre pacientes VIH positivos no han demostrado diferencias significativas en la mortalidad y la aparición de enfermedades oportunistas (10, 15, 16). Sin embargo, algunos estudios han observado una incidencia menor de

efectos adversos, una mejoría en la calidad de vida del paciente y una disminución en la carga viral en pacientes bajo indinavir (10, 14, 15, 17, 18). Este estudio describió los efectos de la triple terapia sobre la progresión y el desarrollo de enfermedades relacionadas al síndrome, en pacientes puertorriqueños diagnosticados con SIDA que recibieron servicios médicos en el Programa SIDA de San Juan desde el 1 de agosto de 1996 hasta el 1 de agosto de 1998. Específicamente, la hipótesis principal de este estudio era que el riesgo de desarrollar la primera enfermedad oportunista luego de iniciar la triple terapia para pacientes bajo la modalidad de indinavir + AZT + 3TC era similar a pacientes bajo la modalidad de ritonavir + AZT + 3TC. La hipótesis secundaria era que la tendencia de los niveles de CD4 y la carga viral a través del tiempo era similar para ambas terapias.

Materiales y Métodos

Para evaluar las hipótesis de investigación se utilizó un diseño epidemiológico observacional de cohorte retrospectivo, con una duración de 2 años, desde el 1 de agosto de 1996 hasta el 1 de agosto de 1998 (Figura 1). Los primeros 12 meses (1 de agosto de 1996 al 31 de julio de 1997) se utilizaron para el reclutamiento de los participantes en el estudio mientras que el período de observación se inició el 1 de agosto de 1996 hasta el 1 de agosto de 1998.

Se seleccionaron a todos aquellos pacientes de SIDA, mayores de 13 años, que iniciaron el tratamiento de triple terapia con indinavir + AZT + 3TC o ritonavir + AZT + 3TC entre el 1 de agosto de 1996 y el 31 de julio de 1997 y que no habían tenido experiencia con inhibidores de proteasa anteriormente. Se excluyeron a todos aquellos pacientes infectados con el VIH sin un diagnóstico de SIDA y aquellos pacientes de SIDA que durante el período de estudio dejaron de buscar medicamentos por más de 3 meses consecutivos.

Todos aquellos individuos que durante el período

PREMPRO™ (conjugated estrogens/medroxyprogesterone acetate tablets) Brief Summary

(For Full Prescribing Information and Patient Information, See Package Circulars.)

Description: PREMPRO™ (conjugated estrogens/medroxyprogesterone acetate tablets) therapy consists of a single tablet containing 0.625 mg of the conjugated estrogens found in Premarin®, and 2.5 mg of medroxyprogesterone acetate (MPA), for oral administration.

ESTROGENS HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO INCREASE THE RISK OF ENDOMETRIAL CARCINOMA IN POSTMENOPAUSAL WOMEN. THIS FINDING REFERS TO ESTROGENS GIVEN WITHOUT PROGESTIN.

Progestins taken with estrogen drugs significantly reduce but do not eliminate this risk. Close clinical surveillance of all women taking estrogens is important. Adequate diagnostic measures, including endometrial sampling when indicated, should be undertaken to rule out malignancy in all cases of undiagnosed persistent or recurring abnormal vaginal bleeding. There is no evidence that "natural" estrogens are more or less hazardous than "synthetic" estrogens at equiestrogenic doses.

ESTROGENS/PROGESTINS SHOULD NOT BE USED DURING PREGNANCY.

There is no indication for estrogen therapy during pregnancy or during the immediate postpartum period. Estrogen therapy during pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of congenital defects in the reproductive organs of the fetus, and possibly other birth defects. Estrogens are not indicated for the prevention of postpartum breast engorgement.

Studies of women who received diethylstilbestrol (DES) during pregnancy have shown that female offspring have an increased risk of vaginal adenosis, squamous cell dysplasia of the uterine cervix, and clear cell vaginal cancer later in life; male offspring have an increased risk of urogenital abnormalities and possibly testicular cancer later in life. The 1985 DES Task Force concluded that use of DES during pregnancy is associated with subsequent increased risk of breast cancer in the mothers, although a causal relationship remains unproven and the observed level of excess risk is similar to that for a number of other breast cancer risk factors.

Several reports also suggest an association between intrauterine exposure to progestational drugs in the first trimester of pregnancy and genital abnormalities in male and female fetuses. The risk of hypospadias, 5 to 8 per 1000 male births in the general population, may be approximately doubled with exposure to these drugs. There are insufficient data to quantify the risk to exposed female fetuses; some of these drugs induce mild virilization of the external genitalia of the female fetus. If the patient is exposed to PREMPRO™ (conjugated estrogens/medroxyprogesterone acetate) during pregnancy, or if she becomes pregnant while taking these drugs, she should be apprised of the potential risks to the fetus.

Estrogens are ineffective for the prevention or treatment of threatened or habitual abortion. There is no adequate evidence that progestational agents are effective in preventing habitual abortion when such drugs are given during the first trimester of pregnancy. Furthermore, in the vast majority of women, the cause of abortion is a defective ovum, which progestational agents could not be expected to influence. In addition, the use of progestational agents with their uterine-relaxant properties, in patients with fertilized defective ova, may cause a delay in spontaneous abortion.

Indications and Usage: Indicated in women with an intact uterus for the treatment of moderate to severe vasomotor symptoms associated with the menopause; treatment of vulvar and vaginal atrophy; prevention of osteoporosis (since estrogen administration is associated with risks as well as benefits, patient selection ideally should be based on prospective identification of risk factors for developing osteoporosis).

Contraindications: 1) Known or suspected pregnancy, including use for missed abortion or as a diagnostic test for pregnancy (see Boxed Warning). Estrogen or progestin may cause fetal harm when administered to a pregnant woman. 2) Known or suspected cancer of the breast. 3) Known or suspected estrogen-dependent neoplasia. 4) Undiagnosed abnormal genital bleeding. 5) Active or past history of thrombophlebitis, thromboembolic disorders, or stroke. 6) Liver dysfunction or disease.

PREMPRO should not be used in patients hypersensitive to its ingredients.

Warnings: ALL WARNINGS BELOW PERTAIN TO THE USE OF THIS COMBINATION PRODUCT. (Based on experience with estrogens and/or progestins):

Induction of malignant neoplasms

Breast cancer: Some studies have reported a moderately increased risk of breast cancer (relative risk of 1.3 to 2.0) in those women on estrogen replacement therapy (ERT) taking higher doses, or in those taking lower doses for prolonged periods of time, especially >10 years. The majority of studies, however, have not shown an association in women who have ever used ERT. The effect of added progestins on the risk of breast cancer is unknown, although a moderately increased risk in those taking combination estrogen/progestin therapy has been reported. Other studies have not shown this relationship.

Endometrial cancer: The reported endometrial cancer risk among users of unopposed estrogen was about 2- to 12-fold or greater than in nonusers and appears dependent on treatment duration and estrogen dose. There is no significant increased risk associated with estrogen use for <1 year. The greatest risk appears associated with prolonged use, with increased risks of 15- to 24-fold for 5 years or more. In one study, persistence of risk was demonstrated for 10 years after cessation of estrogen treatment. In another study, a significant decrease in the incidence of endometrial cancer occurred 6 months after estrogen withdrawal.

A large clinical trial demonstrated that MPA administered with Premarin markedly reduces the incidence of endometrial hyperplasia, a possible precursor of endometrial cancer. Endometrial hyperplasia has been reported in a large clinical trial to occur at a rate of approximately 1% or less with PREMPRO. Studies have also demonstrated a reduced risk of endometrial cancer when a progestin is given with ERT.

Clinical surveillance of all women taking estrogen/progestin combinations is important. Adequate diagnostic measures should be undertaken to rule out malignancy in all cases of undiagnosed persistent or recurring abnormal vaginal bleeding.

Thromboembolic disorders and other vascular problems: In some epidemiological studies, women on estrogen replacement therapy, given alone or in combination with a progestin, have been reported to have an increased risk of thrombophlebitis, and/or thromboembolic disease, although the evidence is conflicting. The physician should be aware of the possibility of thrombotic disorders (thrombophlebitis, retinal thrombosis, cerebral embolism, and pulmonary embolism) during hormone replacement therapy and be alert to their earliest manifestations. Should any of these occur or be suspected, hormone replacement therapy should be discontinued immediately. Women who have risk factors for thrombotic disorders should be kept under careful observation.

Effects during pregnancy: Use in pregnancy is not recommended. See Boxed Warning.

Gallbladder disease: Two studies have reported a 2- to 4-fold increase in the risk of surgically confirmed gallbladder disease in women receiving postmenopausal estrogens.

Elevated blood pressure: Occasional blood pressure increases during ERT have been attributed to idiosyncratic reactions to estrogens. More often, blood pressure has remained the same or has dropped. Postmenopausal estrogen use does not increase the risk of stroke. Nonetheless, blood pressure should be monitored at regular intervals with estrogen use.

Hypercalcemia: Estrogen therapy may lead to severe hypercalcemia in patients with breast cancer and bone metastases.

Visual abnormalities: Discontinue medication pending examination if there is sudden partial or complete loss of vision, or a sudden onset of proptosis, diplopia, or migraine. Withdraw medication if papilledema or retinal vascular lesions occur.

Precautions: GENERAL

Based on experience with estrogens and/or progestins:

Cardiovascular Risk: A causal relationship between ERT and reduction of cardiovascular disease in postmenopausal women has not been proven. The effect of added progestins on this putative benefit is not yet known.

Many published studies suggest that there may be a cause-effect relationship between postmenopausal oral ERT without added progestins and a decrease in cardiovascular disease. Although most of the observational studies which assessed this statistical association have reported a 20% to 50% reduction in coronary heart disease risk and associated mortality in estrogen takers, the following should be considered when interpreting these reports: Because only one of these studies was randomized and it was too small to yield statistically significant results, all relevant studies were subject to selection bias. Thus, the apparently reduced risk of coronary artery disease cannot be attributed with certainty to ERT. It may instead have been caused by life-style and medical characteristics of the women studied with the result that healthier women were selected for estrogen therapy. Ongoing and future large-scale randomized trials may fail to confirm this apparent benefit.

Current medical practice often includes the use of concomitant progestin therapy in women with intact uteri. While the effects of added progestins on the risk of ischemic heart disease are not known, MPA at the dose in PREMPRO™ (conjugated estrogens/medroxyprogesterone acetate tablets) attenuates much of the favorable effect of conjugated estrogens on HDL levels, although it maintains the favorable effect of conjugated estrogens on LDL levels (see **Clinical Pharmacology** in Full Prescribing Information).

The effects of added progestins on the risk of breast cancer are also unknown, however, available epidemiologic evidence suggests that progestins may enhance the moderately increased breast cancer risk reported with prolonged ERT (see **Warnings** section).

The safety data regarding PREMPRO were obtained primarily from clinical trials and epidemiologic studies of postmenopausal Caucasian women, who were at generally low risk for cardiovascular disease and higher than average risk for osteoporosis. The safety profile of PREMPRO derived from these study populations cannot necessarily be extrapolated to other populations of diverse racial and/or demographic composition. When considering prescribing PREMPRO, physicians are advised to weigh the potential benefits and risks of therapy as applicable to each individual patient.

Use in hysterectomized women: Data do not support the use of combined estrogen/progestin in postmenopausal women without a uterus; possible risks may be associated with this combined regimen. Potential risks include some deterioration in glucose tolerance and less favorable effects on lipid metabolism as compared to lipid effects of Premarin® (conjugated estrogens tablets, USP) alone.

Physical examination: A complete medical and family history should be taken prior to the initiation of therapy with special reference to blood pressure, breast, abdomen, and pelvic organs, as well as a Papanicolaou smear. Generally, estrogen should not be prescribed for longer than one year without another physical examination being performed.

Fluid retention: Conditions influenced by fluid retention, such as asthma, epilepsy, migraine, and cardiac or renal dysfunction, require careful observation.

Uterine bleeding: Certain patients may develop abnormal uterine bleeding; if undiagnosed, adequate diagnostic measures are indicated. (See **Warnings**.)

Advise pathologist of estrogen/progestin therapy when relevant specimens are submitted.

Based on experience with estrogens:

Familial hyperlipoproteinemia: Estrogen therapy may be associated with massive elevations of plasma triglycerides leading to pancreatitis and other complications in patients with familial defects of lipoprotein metabolism.

Hypercoagulability: Women taking ERT may have hypercoagulability primarily related to decreased antithrombin activity. This appears dose- and duration-dependent and is less pronounced than that associated with oral contraceptive use. Also, postmenopausal women tend to have changes in levels of coagulation parameters at baseline compared to premenopausal women. There is insufficient information on hypercoagulability in women who have had previous thromboembolic disease.

Menopausal symptoms: Certain patients may develop this undesirable manifestation of estrogenic stimulation.

Based on experience with progestins:

Lipoprotein metabolism: See **Clinical Pharmacology** in Full Prescribing Information.

Impaired glucose tolerance: See **Use in hysterectomized women**, above.

Depression: Observe patients who have a history of depression and discontinue the drugs if depression recurs to a serious degree.

DRUG/LABORATORY TEST INTERACTIONS—1) Accelerated prothrombin time, partial thromboplastin time, and platelet aggregation time; increased platelet count; increased factors II, VII antigen, VIII coagulant activity, IX, X, XII, VII-X complex, II-VII-X complex, and beta-thromboglobulin; decreased levels of anti-factor Xa and antithrombin III, decreased antithrombin III activity; increased levels of fibrinogen and fibrinogen activity; increased plasminogen antigen and activity. 2) Increased thyroid-binding globulin (TBG) leading to increased circulating total thyroid hormone, as measured by protein-bound iodine (PBI), T₄ levels (by column or by radioimmunoassay) or T₃ levels by radioimmunoassay. T₃ resin uptake is decreased, reflecting the elevated TBG. Free T₄ and free T₃ concentrations are unaltered. 3) Other binding proteins may be elevated in serum, i.e., corticosteroid binding globulin (CBG), sex hormone-binding globulin (SHBG), leading to increased circulating corticosteroids and sex steroids respectively. Free or biologically active hormone concentrations are unchanged. Other plasma proteins may be increased (angiotensinogen/renin substrate, alpha-1-antitrypsin, ceruloplasmin). 4) Increased plasma HDL and HDL-2 subfraction concentrations, reduced LDL cholesterol concentration, increased triglyceride levels. 5) Impaired glucose tolerance. Observe diabetic patients carefully. 6) Reduced response to metoprolol test. 7) Reduced serum folate concentration. 8) Aminoglutethimide administered concomitantly with MPA may significantly depress the bioavailability of MPA.

CARCINOGENESIS, MUTAGENESIS AND IMPAIRMENT OF FERTILITY: Long term continuous administration of natural and synthetic estrogens in certain animal species increases the frequency of carcinomas of the breasts, uterus, cervix, vagina, testis, and liver. (See **Contraindications** and **Warnings**.)

Female rats exposed to dietary dosages of up to 5000 µg/kg/day of MPA (50 times higher—based on AUC values—than the level observed experimentally in women taking 10 mg of MPA), exhibited a dose-related increase in pancreatic islet cell tumors (adenomas and carcinomas). Pancreatic tumor incidence was increased at 1000 and 5000 µg/kg/day, but not at 200 µg/kg/day.

A decreased incidence of spontaneous mammary gland tumors was observed in all three MPA-treated groups, compared to controls, in the two-year rat study. This decreased incidence may be linked to the significant decrease in serum prolactin concentration observed in rats.

Beagle dogs treated with MPA developed mammary nodules, some of which were malignant. Although nodules occasionally appeared in control animals, they were intermittent in nature, whereas the nodules in the drug-treated animals were larger, more numerous, persistent, and there were some breast malignancies with metastases. Progestogens stimulate synthesis and release of growth hormone (GH) in dogs, resulting in stimulation of mammary growth and tumors. In contrast, GH in humans is not increased, nor does GH have any significant mammatrophic role. Therefore, the MPA-induced increase of mammary tumors in dogs probably has no significance to humans. No pancreatic tumors occurred in dogs.

PREGNANCY CATEGORY X—Estrogens/progestins should not be used during pregnancy. See **Contraindications** and **Boxed Warning**.

NURSING MOTHERS—Generally, drugs should not be given to nursing mothers unless clearly necessary since many drugs are excreted in human milk. Estrogen administration to nursing mothers may decrease the milk's quantity and quality. Detectable amounts of progestin have been identified in the milk of mothers receiving the drug. The effect of this on the nursing infant is not known.

Adverse Reactions: (See **Warnings** regarding induction of neoplasia, adverse effects on the fetus, increased incidence of gallbladder disease, elevated blood pressure, thromboembolic disorders, cardiovascular disease, visual abnormalities, and hypercalcemia and **Precautions** for cardiovascular disease.)

The following adverse reactions have been reported with estrogen and/or progestin therapy: **Genitourinary system.** Changes in vaginal bleeding pattern and abnormal withdrawal bleeding or flow, breakthrough bleeding, spotting, change in amount of cervical secretion, premenstrual-like syndrome, cystitis-like syndrome, increase in size of uterine leiomyomata, vaginal candidiasis, amenorrhea, changes in cervical erosion. **Breasts.** Tenderness, enlargement, galactorrhea. **Gastrointestinal.** Nausea, cholestatic jaundice, changes in appetite, vomiting, abdominal cramps, bloating, increased incidence of gallbladder disease, pancreatitis. **Skin.** Chloasma or melasma that may persist when drug is discontinued, erythema multiforme, erythema nodosum, hemorrhagic eruption, loss of scalp hair, hirsutism, itching, urticaria, pruritus, generalized rash (allergic) with and without pruritus, acne. **Cardiovascular.** In susceptible individuals, change in blood pressure, thrombophlebitis, pulmonary embolism, cerebral thrombosis and embolism. **CNS.** Headache, dizziness, mental depression, nervousness, migraine, chorea, insomnia, somnolence. **Eyes.** Neuro-ocular lesions, e.g., retinal thrombosis and optic neuritis. Steepening of corneal curvature, intolerance of contact lenses. **Miscellaneous.** Increase or decrease in weight, edema, changes in libido, fatigue, backache, reduced carbohydrate tolerance, aggravation of porphyria, pyrexia, anaphylactoid reactions, anaphylaxis.

Acute Overdosage: May cause nausea and vomiting; withdrawal bleeding may occur in females.

Dosage and Administration: PREMPRO 0.625 mg/2.5 mg therapy consists of a single tablet to be taken once daily.

For moderate to severe vasomotor symptoms, vulvar and vaginal atrophy—re-evaluate patients at 3-month to 6-month intervals to determine if treatment is still necessary.

For prevention of osteoporosis—monitor patients closely for signs of endometrial cancer; appropriate diagnostic measures should be taken to rule out malignancy in the event of persistent or recurring abnormal vaginal bleeding.

This brief summary is based on PREMPRO CI4664-3, Revised 5/21/97.

Reference: 1. Data on file, Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories. PREMARN® (conjugated estrogens tablets, USP) Prescribing Information.

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Contraindications: Estrogens should not be used in women (or men) with any of the following conditions: 1) known or suspected pregnancy, 2) known or suspected breast cancer, 3) known or suspected estrogen-dependent neoplasia, 4) undiagnosed abnormal genital bleeding, 5) active thrombophlebitis or thromboembolic disorders.

PREMARIN should not be used in patients hypersensitive to its ingredients.

Note: Estrogens have been reported to increase the risk of endometrial carcinoma in

postmenopausal women. This finding refers to estrogens given without progestin.

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de estudio interrumpieron o cambiaron su terapia inicial antes de que se desarrollara la primera enfermedad oportunista fueron clasificados como observaciones incompletas ("censored"). De igual forma fueron clasificados como observaciones incompletas a todos aquellos participantes del estudio que murieron antes de que se terminara el estudio, pacientes que no desarrollaron una enfermedad oportunista al terminar el estudio, pacientes que salieron del estudio por migración o por alguna causa distinta a una enfermedad oportunista.

Los datos se obtuvieron de los expedientes médicos y de la hoja de reporte confidencial de los participantes del Programa SIDA de San Juan. La variable respuesta fue el tiempo que transcurrió entre el inicio de la terapia y el diagnóstico de la primera enfermedad oportunista. La modalidad de la triple terapia fue la variable predictora principal para explicar el comportamiento del tiempo libre de enfermedades oportunistas. Los tipos de modalidades de triple terapia fueron: ritonavir + AZT + 3TC versus indinavir + AZT + 3TC. Se consideraron como variables potenciales de confusión las siguientes: género, escolaridad, ingreso anual, historial de uso de alcohol, historial de uso de cigarrillos, historial de promiscuidad, profilaxis para enfermedades oportunistas, niveles de CD4 y niveles de carga viral al momento de entrar al estudio.

Para la creación de la base de datos y la entrada de datos se utilizó el programa Epi-Info versión 6.04c (19). Para los análisis estadísticos se utilizó el programa "Statistical Analysis System" (SAS) (20). Para las variables continuas se utilizó la prueba de suma de rangos de Wilcoxon para determinar si existían diferencias significativas entre las dos modalidades de triple terapia (21). Para evaluar la asociación entre las variables categóricas se utilizó la estadística ji-cuadrada de Pearson (muestras grandes) o la prueba exacta de Fisher (muestras pequeñas) (20). Para determinar la magnitud de la asociación entre la exposición a la terapia y la variable considerada en la tabla de contingencia, se estimó el riesgo relativo a través de un intervalo de confianza al 95% (IC 95%) mediante el método de "test-based" (21).

Para estimar la relación entre el tiempo y los niveles de CD4 y el tiempo y la carga viral se realizó un modelo de regresión lineal simple para cada individuo (21). Las variables dependientes fueron los niveles de CD4 y la carga viral, mientras que la variable independiente fue el tiempo transcurrido entre el inicio de la triple terapia y la toma de muestra de sangre en meses. La variable dependiente fue calculada hasta que ocurrió alguno de los siguientes eventos por un periodo máximo de 6 meses: la terminación del estudio, el cambio de terapia, la interrupción de la terapia, o el desarrollo de la primera enfermedad oportunista. El signo del estimado de la pendiente de la

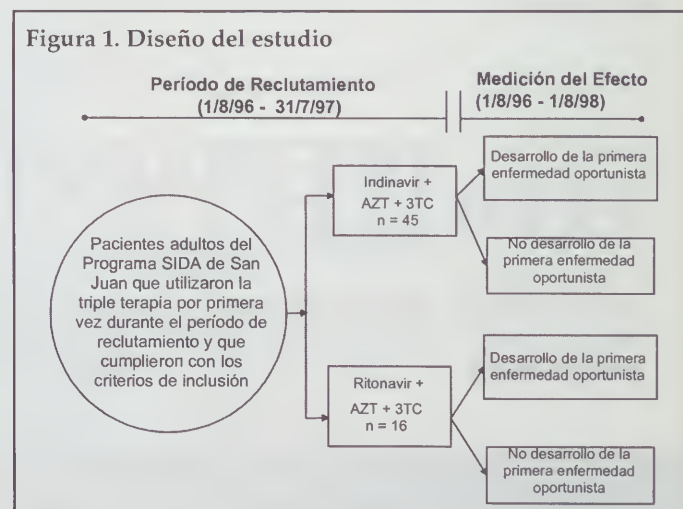
línea de regresión (β) asociado a los datos de cada individuo indica si la razón de cambio entre los niveles de CD4 o de carga viral y el tiempo es positiva (aumento) o negativa (disminución). A través de una tabla de contingencia se evaluó la relación entre las terapias y la razón de cambio entre los niveles de CD4 o de carga viral.

Para estimar la probabilidad de que un paciente no desarrolle una enfermedad oportunista después de un mes en específico se utilizó el método de Kaplan-Meier (22). A través de este método se obtuvo una función de la probabilidad de sobrevivencia en diferentes tiempos para cada modalidad de terapia. Con esta función de probabilidad se pretende tener una aproximación del tiempo mediano de sobrevivencia, es decir, el tiempo en que las probabilidades son menores o iguales al 50%. La comparación de las curvas de sobrevivencia se realizó mediante la prueba de Wilcoxon ya que el supuesto de riesgos proporcionales no se cumplió. (22)

Resultados

Durante el período de reclutamiento un total de 189 pacientes del Programa SIDA de San Juan iniciaron una de las dos triples terapias de estudio. De éstos, un total de 139 (74%) estaban bajo la triple terapia de indinavir (indinavir + AZT + 3TC) y 50 (26%) estaban bajo la triple terapia de ritonavir (ritonavir + AZT + 3TC) por primera vez. Del grupo de indinavir, 105 (76%) no dejaron de buscar sus medicamentos por al menos 3 meses consecutivos. De este grupo, 50 pacientes (48%) tenían un diagnóstico confirmado de SIDA, de los cuales 5 (10%) no tenían sus expedientes médicos disponibles, dejando un total de 45 pacientes para inclusión en el estudio (90%) (Figura 1). Del grupo de ritonavir, 29 (58%) no dejaron de buscar sus medicamentos por al menos 3 meses consecutivos. De éstos, 21 (72%) tenían un diagnóstico confirmado de SIDA, 5 (24%) no tenían sus expedientes médicos disponibles, dejando un total de 16 pacientes para inclusión en el estudio (76%).

Figura 1. Diseño del estudio



No se observaron diferencias estadísticamente significativas por terapia y las variables siguientes: género, edad promedio, años de escolaridad, ingreso anual, historial de promiscuidad, historial de uso de alcohol, historial de uso de cigarrillos, indicador de riesgo para el VIH, nivel mediano de CD4 y nivel promedio de la carga viral al momento del diagnóstico o al momento de iniciar la triple terapia y uso de medicamentos profilácticos para las enfermedades oportunistas antes o durante la terapia ($p>0.05$) (Tabla I). Al observar la distribución por modalidad de terapia de pacientes que cambiaron o interrumpieron la terapia en algún momento durante el período comprendido entre su inicio y el desarrollo de la primera enfermedad oportunista o clasificación de "censored", se encontró una diferencia estadísticamente significativa ($P=0.009$). La probabilidad de cambiar o interrumpir la terapia fue 2 veces mayor (IC 95%=1.30, 2.99) para pacientes bajo ritonavir en comparación con pacientes bajo indinavir (datos no presentados).

tiempo y los niveles de carga viral por modalidad de terapia. Se observó que el 58% del grupo de indinavir resultó con una tendencia decreciente en los niveles de carga viral, mientras que en el grupo de ritonavir esta proporción fue de un 62%. Sin embargo, esta diferencia no resultó estadísticamente significativa ($P>0.05$) (Tabla 2). El poder de prueba de esta comparación, utilizando la aproximación normal, resultó ser muy bajo (4%).

Al examinar la frecuencia del diagnóstico de la primera enfermedad oportunista luego de iniciar la terapia, se observó que 15 pacientes (24.6%) desarrollaron enfermedades oportunistas. El síndrome de adelgazamiento fue la enfermedad oportunista más frecuente (34%) seguido de herpes simple (27%) (datos no presentados). En cuanto a la probabilidad de permanecer libre de enfermedad oportunista para el grupo de indinavir, un total de 37 observaciones

Tabla I
Comparación de características clínicas y demográficas de pacientes por grupo de terapia

Característica	Indinavir + 3TC + AZT (n=45)	Ritonavir + 3TC + AZT (n=16)	Valor de p
Género masculino	80%	80%	>0.05
Edad promedio \pm EE*	41.3 \pm 9.7	39.9 \pm 10.6	>0.05
Años de escolaridad \leq 12	65%	42%	> 0.05
Ingreso anual < \$3,000	76%	61%	> 0.05
Historial de promiscuidad	63%	82%	> 0.05
Historial de uso de alcohol	57%	75%	> 0.05
Historial de uso de cigarrillos	67%	33%	> 0.05
Indicador de riesgo para el VIH			> 0.05
Drogas intravenosas y heterosexual	18%	15%	
Drogas intravenosas y homosexual	30%	35%	
Drogas intravenosas y bisexual	12%	10%	
Contacto heterosexual	40%	40%	
Niveles mediano de CD4	146	193	>0.05
Niveles promedio del logaritmo de la carga viral \pm EE*	4.9 \pm 0.12	4.7 \pm 0.54	> 0.05
Profilaxis para enfermedades oportunistas	87%	75%	> 0.05

* Error estándar

Para evaluar la asociación entre los niveles de CD4 a través de un período máximo de 6 meses y las terapias a través del tiempo, se utilizó un modelo de regresión lineal simple en los niveles de cada individuo. Los resultados demostraron que el 69% de los sujetos en el grupo de indinavir resultaron con una tendencia creciente en los niveles de CD4, mientras que para el grupo de ritonavir esta proporción fue de un 42%. Sin embargo, esta diferencia no resultó estadísticamente significativa ($P>0.05$) (Tabla II). El poder de prueba, utilizando la aproximación normal, de esta comparación de proporciones resultó ser bajo (28%). El análisis anterior se repitió para evaluar la relación entre el

incompletas fueron observadas, para un 82% del total de sujetos bajo la terapia. A base de los datos obtenidos no se pudo determinar el tiempo mediano de sobrevivencia dado que las probabilidades estimadas fueron mayores del 50%. La probabilidad más cercana al 50% en este tratamiento fue de 76 % con un tiempo aproximado de 12.5 meses (Figura 2). En cuanto a la probabilidad de permanecer libre de enfermedad oportunista para el grupo de ritonavir, un total de 13 observaciones incompletas fueron observadas, para un 83% del total de sujetos bajo la terapia. El tiempo mediano para este grupo fue aproximadamente 10 meses (Figura 2). Las probabilidades de permanecer

Tabla II

Niveles de CD4 y carga viral a través del tiempo, para los primeros 6 meses bajo la terapia

	Razón de cambio positivo ($\beta > 0$)	Razón de cambio negativo ($\beta < 0$)	Valor de p
Niveles de CD4			
Indinavir + 3TC + AZT (n=36)	69%	31%	> 0.05
Ritonavir + 3TC + AZT (n=12)	42%	58%	
Niveles de carga viral			
Indinavir + 3TC + AZT (n=12)	42%	58%	> 0.05
Ritonavir + 3TC + AZT (n=8)	38%	62%	

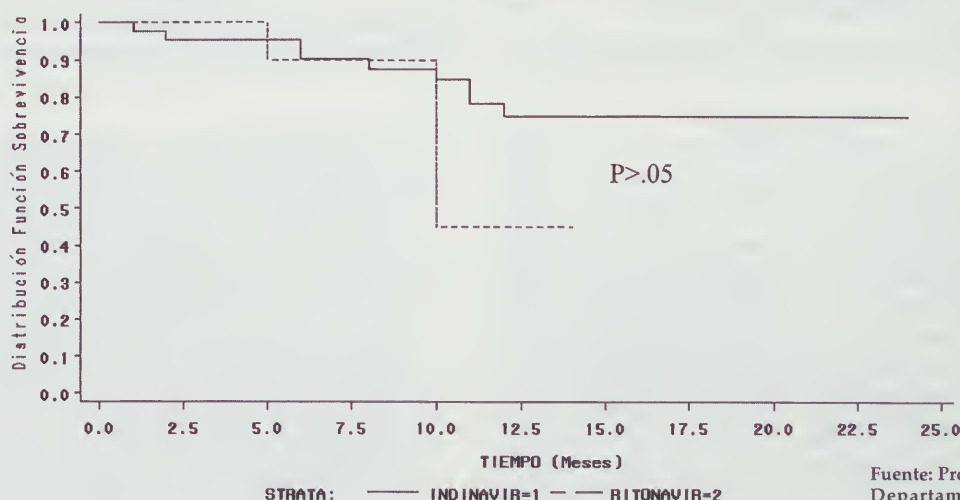
libre de enfermedad oportunista en ambos grupos se mantuvieron similares hasta aproximadamente el octavo mes luego del inicio de las terapias. No obstante, a partir del décimo mes la probabilidad de permanecer libre de enfermedad oportunista en el grupo de ritonavir disminuyó, comparado con el grupo de indinavir (Tabla III).

Discusión

Similar al estudio de Mars y colaboradores (10), este estudio no encontró una diferencia estadísticamente significativa entre la terapia de indinavir y la terapia de ritonavir en cuanto a la probabilidad de permanecer libre de enfermedad oportunista. Los resultados demuestran que el tiempo mediano de permanecer libre de enfermedad oportunista fue de 10 meses para ritonavir; sin embargo, para el grupo de indinavir la probabilidad de permanecer libre de enfermedad oportunista no fue menor del 50%. La probabilidad estimada más baja en el grupo de indinavir fue de 76% a los 12.5 meses. Esto presenta una diferencia la cual, aunque no fue estadísticamente significativa, quizás sea de importancia clínica.

No se encontraron diferencias significativas entre las modalidades de indinavir y ritonavir en cuanto a las tendencias de los niveles de CD4 y de carga viral a través del tiempo, contrario a los resultados del estudio realizado por Mars y colaboradores (10). Sin embargo, los hallazgos de este estudio son similares a los publicados por Clumeck y colaboradores (14) quienes no encontraron diferencias significativas en dichos parámetros. Al analizar las tendencias en los niveles de CD4 y de carga viral, se observó una mayor tendencia creciente en los niveles de CD4 en el grupo de indinavir. Sin embargo en los niveles de carga viral, se observó una mayor tendencia decreciente en el grupo de ritonavir. Estos resultados podrían sugerir un mayor beneficio en los pacientes bajo la terapia triple de indinavir en el caso de los niveles de CD4 y para ritonavir en el caso de la carga viral. Sin embargo, no se puede generalizar este resultado debido al tamaño reducido de los grupos de estudio. No obstante, el análisis de tendencias en los niveles de CD4 y de carga viral reveló una alta proporción de tendencias negativas en los niveles de CD4 y tendencias positivas en el caso de la carga viral. Estos hallazgos en las tendencias pueden reflejar una pobre adherencia

Figura 2.
Probabilidad de permanecer libre de enfermedad oportunista por modalidad de terapia



Fuente: Programa SIDA de San Juan,
Departamento de Epidemiología,
Municipio de San Juan, Puerto Rico

Tabla III

Probabilidad de permanecer libre de enfermedad oportunista según el tiempo bajo la triple terapia

Tiempo bajo la terapia (en meses)	Indinavir + 3TC + AZT	Ritonavir + 3TC + AZT
2	95.4%	100.0%
4	95.4%	100.0%
6	90.1%	90.0%
8	87.5%	90.0%
10	85.7%	45.0%
12	75.8%	45.0%

de los pacientes al tratamiento antiretroviral. Estudios previos han sugerido que existen varios factores que pueden influenciar la adherencia al medicamento afectando negativamente la efectividad del mismo (3, 23-25). Por otro lado, el desarrollo de mutaciones en el virus puede causar resistencia a las terapias antiretrovirales (26-28).

Este estudio demuestra que los pacientes bajo la modalidad de ritonavir tenían 2 veces mayor probabilidad de cambiar o interrumpir la terapia que los pacientes bajo indinavir. Estos hallazgos son similares a los resultados encontrados por Valette y colaboradores (17), quienes encontraron que la frecuencia de interrupción fue 2.8 veces mayor para pacientes bajo ritonavir comparado con pacientes bajo indinavir. Las razones para un mayor cambio o interrupción de la terapia de ritonavir no se determinaron en este estudio. Sin embargo, basados en la revisión de literatura, es probable que la razón principal sea la toxicidad y los efectos secundarios que causa el ritonavir (10, 12, 14, 17).

Al examinar la primera enfermedad oportunista desarrollada luego de comenzar las terapias, el síndrome de adelgazamiento presentó la mayor frecuencia, siendo este resultado consistente con los hallazgos de Pérez y colaboradores (29). Otro resultado similar de este estudio con los hallazgos publicados por Pérez y colaboradores es que la *Pneumocystis carinii*, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* y el herpes simple se encuentran entre las primeras cinco enfermedades oportunistas, más frecuentes.

Una limitación importante de este estudio fue la disponibilidad de los expedientes médicos ya que algunos de los expedientes no se pudieron evaluar al momento de ser utilizados para este estudio. Otra limitación fue el número reducido de sujetos participantes lo cual implica un bajo poder estadístico. Este bajo poder podría explicar las diferencias no significativas en la efectividad de las terapias. Los resultados aquí presentados sugieren la necesidad de realizar un

ensayo clínico controlado debido a que ambas terapias son utilizadas regularmente y el conocimiento sobre sus efectos a corto y a largo plazo es limitado.

Resumen: Este estudio observacional comparó la probabilidad de desarrollar enfermedades oportunistas en pacientes adultos del Programa SIDA de San Juan que iniciaron el tratamiento de indinavir + zidovudina + lamivudina ($n = 45$) o ritonavir + zidovudina + lamivudina ($n = 16$) entre el 1/agosto/96 y el 31/julio/97. No se encontraron diferencias estadísticamente significativas en la probabilidad de desarrollar enfermedades oportunistas, el aumento de los niveles de CD4 y la disminución de la carga viral entre ambos grupos. Sin embargo, se observaron mayores probabilidades de permanecer libre de enfermedad oportunista para indinavir después de 10 meses ($p > 0.05$). Además, la probabilidad de cambiar o interrumpir la terapia fue 2 veces mayor para el grupo de ritonavir comparado con indinavir ($p < 0.05$). Estos resultados sugieren la necesidad de confirmar estos hallazgos en ensayos clínicos controlados y de determinar los efectos a corto y largo plazo en pacientes puertorriqueños.

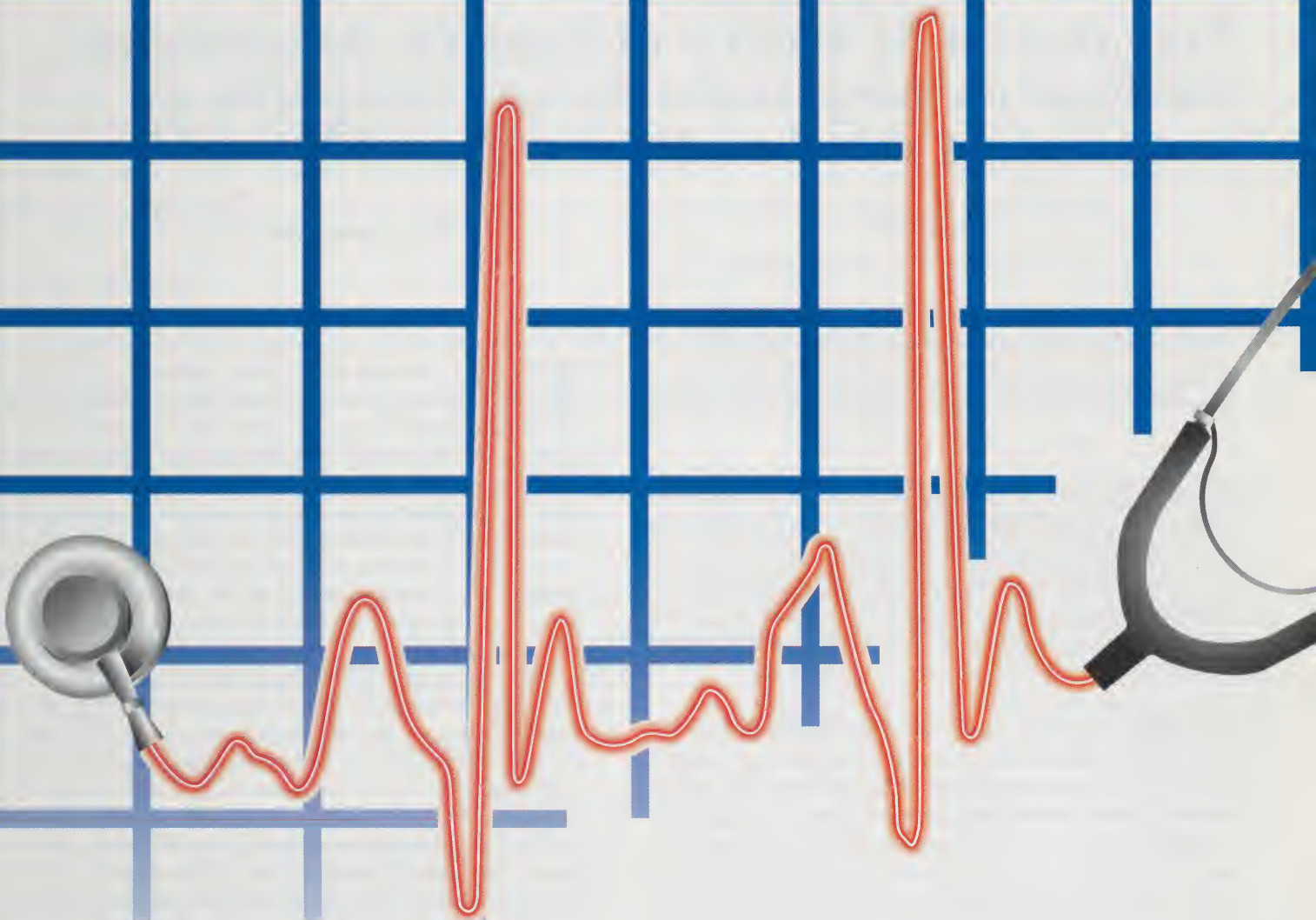
Reconocimientos:

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Estudios Originales:

Prevalencia de asma y utilización de servicios médicos en asegurados de una compañía de servicios de salud en Puerto Rico, 1996-1997

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Resumen

Objetivo: Describir la prevalencia de asma y el patrón de utilización de servicios médicos en pacientes con diagnóstico de asma asegurados en Triple S durante los años 1996 y 1997.

Métodos: Se utilizaron las reclamaciones médicas de asegurados de la Triple S cuyo diagnóstico principal fue asma (ICD-9 493-493.9). Se estimó la prevalencia y la utilización de servicios médicos (visitas a oficina, emergencia y hospitalizaciones). Se utilizó el modelo de Poisson para explicar las diferencias en la utilización de servicios usando la edad como variable predictora.

Resultados: La prevalencia de asma fue 14.5%, siendo mayor en los menores de 18 años, y en el género femenino. Un 54.3% de los pacientes asmáticos visitaron oficinas de médicos, siendo mayor la utilización en pacientes < 18 años. Sin embargo, la mayor proporción de usuarios a salas de emergencia se reportó en el grupo de 18 a 44 años, mientras que la proporción de admisiones hospitalarias fue mayor en el grupo de 45-64 años. Los medicamentos más utilizados fueron los beta-agonistas de alivio rápido. Más de la mitad (56%) de los costos por servicios se atribuyen a hospitalizaciones, mientras que un 31% se atribuyó a farmacia.

Conclusiones: La prevalencia de asma en esta población es alta, principalmente en los más jóvenes, lo que concuerda con resultados previos en grupos de puertorriqueños residentes en la Isla y Estados Unidos. De igual forma, se evidenciaron diferencias por edad en la utilización de servicios médicos así como el alto costo de las hospitalizaciones. La realización de estudios de prevalencia usando otras fuentes de información, así como una definición estándar de la condición, serían de gran utilidad para confirmar estos resultados.

Introducción

El asma es una condición crónica que puede impactar negativamente la calidad de vida de las personas afectadas y cuyo impacto económico es de gran proporción en los servicios de salud, particularmente por la frecuente utilización de servicios de alto costo tales como salas de emergencia y hospitalizaciones. El aumento en la prevalencia del asma y el aumento concomitante en la utilización de estos servicios han sido ampliamente documentados en diversos países (1-4). Por otro lado, los programas comprensivos de manejo de asma están dirigidos a reducir la utilización de estos servicios, lo que, a su vez, podría aumentar las visitas a médicos y el uso de medicamentos. Sin embargo, análisis de costo-beneficio han demostrado que este cambio en el patrón de utilización de estos servicios suele ser favorable (5).

Para obtener una reducción en la utilización de servicios de emergencia y hospitalizaciones se deben conocer los factores que están correlacionados con su uso. Estudios realizados en Estados Unidos han reportado que la frecuencia en la utilización de estos servicios está relacionada con factores tales como la edad, el género, la raza, el cuidado primario de salud y los factores socioeconómicos (1, 6-10). El efecto económico del asma es considerable. En 1994 el costo total de esta condición en Estados Unidos fue estimado en aproximadamente \$5.8 billones (1).

En Puerto Rico, aun cuando la condición parece ser altamente prevalente, se reportan en la literatura científica un número limitado de estudios epidemiológicos (11,12). Una de las mayores dificultades para llevar a cabo estudios epidemiológicos de esta condición es el obtener información válida y confiable.

Institución: Triple-S, Inc., División de Servicios Técnicos, Unidad de Investigación y Bioestadística; Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Ciencias Médicas, Escuela Graduada de Salud Pública, Departamento de Biostatística y Epidemiología.

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Fuente de Financiamiento: Triple-S, Inc., Health Insurance Company, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Una de las fuentes que pueden evidenciar la magnitud del problema de asma en Puerto Rico son los datos existentes en las compañías de seguros de salud.

El propósito de este estudio fue describir la prevalencia de asma y el patrón de utilización de servicios de sala de emergencias, hospitalización y visitas a oficina en pacientes con diagnósticos de asma que eran asegurados activos de Triple-S durante los años 1996 y 1997.

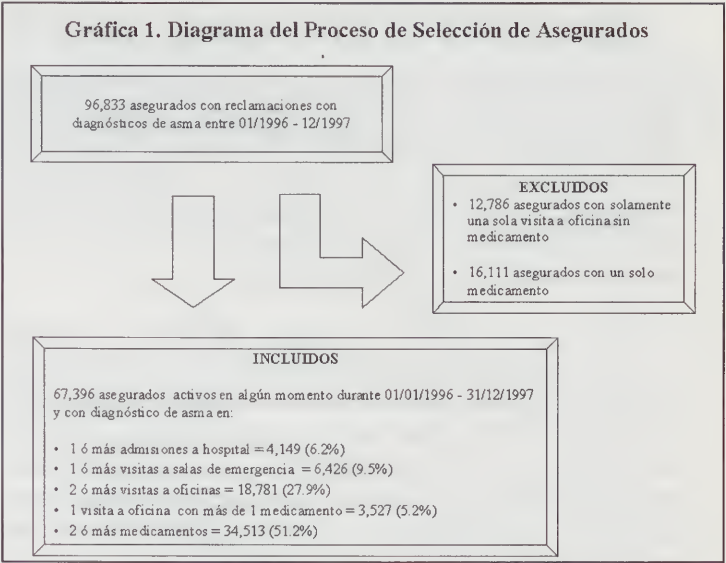
Métodos

Grupo de estudio

Se definió como paciente asmático a todo aquel asegurado activo durante todo o parte de los años 1996 y 1997, cuyo diagnóstico principal en la reclamación por concepto del servicio fue asma (código ICD-9 493 hasta 493.9), según reportado por un médico o una institución hospitalaria. La gráfica 1 ilustra el diagrama de selección (inclusión y exclusión) de los asegurados. Se excluyeron aquellas personas que tenían una sola visita a la oficina del médico con el diagnóstico de asma o un medicamento utilizado para esta condición. Esto se hizo para disminuir la posibilidad de incluir personas con diagnósticos transitorios o poco confiables de la condición. Se identificaron 67,396 personas que cumplieron con los criterios de inclusión del estudio de un total de 96,833 con diagnóstico de asma. Estos criterios de selección han sido utilizados en otro estudio similar (13).

La utilización de medicamentos se dividió en 9 categorías. De éstas, 5 son categorías de medicamentos considerados de larga duración, 3 de corta duración y una incluía todas las combinaciones de medicamentos utilizados para controlar el asma.

Para establecer diferencias estadísticas entre los diferentes subgrupos se realizaron pruebas de significancia a través del uso de la distribución de Ji-cuadrada. La



Fuente: Tiple-S, Inc.; Unidad de Investigación y Bioestadística

prevalencia se estimó usando como denominador un promedio de los dos años de estudio de la población de asegurados (población al primero de julio). La utilización de servicios se calculó usando tanto la proporción de usuarios (asegurados con al menos un servicio entre el total de asegurados) como el promedio de utilización (número de servicios entre el total de asegurados). La comparación de la tasa de utilización entre grupos se evaluó a través del modelo de Poisson (Kleinbaum, 1988). Este modelo permitió estimar el cambio porcentual en las tasas de utilización de los diferentes grupos de edad con un 95% de confianza. El procesamiento de los datos se realizó con los paquetes estadísticos SPSS 7.5 (14) y GLIM 4 (15).

Resultados

La prevalencia de asma entre el total de asegurados fue 14.5%. En el género masculino la prevalencia fue de 13.5% mientras que en el femenino fue de 15.6%. La Tabla 1 ilustra la distribución de asma por género

Tabla 1
Asegurados con Diagnóstico de Asma por Grupo de Edad y Género, 1996 - 1997

Grupo de Edad	Género					
	Masculino		Femenino		Total	
	Núm.	%	Núm.	%	Núm.	%
< 17	16,841	57	13,002	34	29,843	44
18-44	7,080	24	14,277	38	21,357	32
45-64	4,073	14	8,737	23	12,810	19
> 65	1,394	05	1,992	05	3,386	05
Total	29,388	100%	38,008	100%	67,396	100%

y edad. En general, el 76% de los casos era menor de 44 años de edad, y de éstos, el 44% era menor de 18 años. La mayoría de los casos fueron del género femenino (56.4%). La mayor proporción de pacientes masculinos fueron menores de 18 años de edad (57%) mientras que en el género femenino, el grupo de edad más afectado fue el de 18 a 44 años de edad (38%). Se encontró una distribución similar en el grupo de mayor edad entre ambos géneros.

Un total de 36,589 pacientes asmáticos (54.3%) visitaron oficinas de médicos entre 1996 y 1997, de los cuales 8,460 (23%) tuvo 5 visitas o más. Por el contrario, 7,421 (11%) tuvieron una o más visitas a sala de emergencia y 4,149 (6%) tuvieron una o más admisiones hospitalarias. La Tabla 2 ilustra el número de asegurados que utilizaron estos servicios médicos en una o más ocasión por grupos de edad.

Al analizar la proporción y el promedio de utilización se encontró que la mayor proporción de usuarios de oficinas médicas estuvo en el grupo de edad de menos de 18 años (59.6%), mientras que el grupo de 65 años ó más de edad se observó la menor proporción (47.6%) ($p < 0.0001$) (Tabla 3). En las visitas a sala de emergencia la mayor proporción de usuarios con al menos una visita estuvo en el grupo de 18 a 44 años de edad (13.3%) ($p < 0.0001$). Al comparar la proporción de usuarios con al menos una visita a sala de emergencia en el grupo de 18-44 años de edad y el

grupo de mayor edad (65), se observa una menor proporción de usuarios en este último grupo de más del doble (13.3% vs 4.8%).

La categoría de edad con mayor proporción de admisiones hospitalarias fue la de 45-64 años (6.8%) seguida muy de cerca por el grupo de 17 años (6.4%) (Tabla 3).

El promedio de utilización de servicios por grupo de edad demostró lo siguiente: el mayor promedio de utilización de visitas de oficinas (192.50 visitas por cada 100 asegurados) y admisiones hospitalarias (10.46 admisiones por cada 100 asegurados) fue en el grupo de 45 a 64 años. Sin embargo, el mayor promedio de utilización de sala de emergencia fue en el grupo de 18 a 44 años de edad (17.13 por cada 100 asegurados) (Tabla 3).

Las visitas a oficinas de médicos y las admisiones hospitalarias fueron significativamente mayores en el género femenino ($p < 0.0001$). Sin embargo, en visitas a salas de emergencia estas diferencias no fueron estadísticamente significativas ($p = 0.506$), aun cuando en el grupo femenino se observó una mayor utilización.

Al comparar la utilización de servicios médicos por grupos de edad usando como referencia el grupo de menores de 18 años, se evidenciaron diferencias signi-

Tabla 2
Asegurados con Diagnóstico de Asma por Tipos de Servicio y Grupo de Edad, 1996 - 1997

	Grupo de Edad (años)									
	< 17		18 - 44		45 - 64		> 65		Total	
	Núm.	%	Núm.	%	Núm.	%	Núm.	%	Núm.	%
Visitas a Oficinas										
1 - 4	13,999	49.8%	8,314	29.6%	4,765	16.9%	1,051	3.7%	28,129	100.00%
5 ó más	3,784	44.7%	2,004	23.7%	2,112	25.0%	560	6.6%	8,460	100.00%
Total	17,783		10,318		6,877		1,611		36,589	
Visitas a Salas de Emergencia										
1 - 2	3,151	44.6%	2,717	38.5%	1,044	14.8%	149	2.1%	7,061	100.00%
3 ó más	145	40.3%	134	37.2%	66	18.3%	15	4.2%	360	100.00%
Total	3,296		2,851		1,110		164		7,421	
Admisiones Hospitalarias										
1 - 2	1,764	46.8%	1,117	29.6%	754	20.0%	134	3.6%	3,769	100.00%
3 ó más	153	40.3%	102	26.8%	113	29.7%	12	3.2%	380	100.00%
Total	1,917		1,219		867		146		4,149	

Tabla 3

Proporción de Usuarios y Promedio de Utilización de los Asegurados con Diagnóstico de Asma por Tipo de Servicio y Grupo de Edad, 1996 - 1997

	Grupo de Edad (años)				Total
	< 17	18 - 44	45 - 64	> 65	
Visitas a Oficinas					
Proporción de Usuarios*	59.6%	48.3%	53.7%	47.6%	54.3%
Promedio de Utilización**	162.16	127.04	192.50	185.09	157.95
Visitas a Salas de Emergencia					
Proporción de Usuarios*	11.0%	13.3%	8.7%	4.8%	11.01%
Promedio de Utilización**	13.68	17.13	11.25	6.53	13.95
Admisiones Hospitalarias					
Proporción de Usuarios*	6.4%	5.7%	6.8%	4.3%	6.2%
Promedio de Utilización**	9.08	7.82	10.46	6.26	8.80

* (Asegurados con al menos un servicio en ese intervalo de edad / Total de asegurados en ese grupo de edad) * 100

** (Número de servicios en ese intervalo de edad / Total de asegurados en ese grupo de edad) * 100

ficativas ($p < 0.05$). Se observó una disminución en la utilización de visitas a oficinas médicas en todos los grupos de edad con respecto a la utilización de los menores de 18 años. El mayor cambio se encontró en el grupo de 65 años ó más con 20.2% (IC 95%: -24.1%, -15.9%). Con relación a la utilización de la sala de emergencia se observó un aumento significativo de 20.9% (IC 95%: 15.0%, 27.1%) entre el grupo de 18 a 44 años con respecto a los menores de 18 años, mientras que al comparar las hospitalizaciones de menores de 18 años con el grupo de 18 a 44 años, se observó una disminución de 11.1% (IC 95%: -17.3%, -4.5%) en este último grupo (Tabla 4).

Los medicamentos más recetados fueron los beta-agonistas de alivio rápido (65.9%) seguidos de los

corticosteroides sistémicos (48.8%) y las xantinas (39.3%). No se observaron grandes diferencias en el promedio de utilización de medicamentos específicos por género. Sin embargo, se observaron diferentes patrones por grupos de edad. Por ejemplo, el promedio de utilización de las xantinas y los beta-agonistas de larga duración aumenta con la edad mientras que la utilización de los anti-inflamatorios disminuyen con la edad. Con relación a los beta-agonistas de alivio rápido, no se observaron grandes cambios en el promedio de uso con relación a la edad (Tabla 5).

La gráfica 2 muestra el gasto porcentual de los asegurados con diagnóstico de asma. Los servicios de hospitalización tuvieron el mayor porcentaje de gasto (56%) seguido por los de farmacia (31%).

Tabla 4

Cambio Proporcional en la Utilización de Servicios Médicos por Grupo de Edad

Grupo de Edad (años)	Visitas a Oficina		Visitas a Sala de Emergencia		Admisiones a Hospital	
	Cambio Proporcional	Intervalo*	Cambio Proporcional	Intervalo	Cambio Proporcional	Intervalo
< 17	Referencia		Referencia		Referencia	
18 - 44	-18.90%	(-20.8%, -6.9%)	20.90%	(+15.0%, +27.1%)	-11.10%	(-17.3%, -4.5%)
45 - 64	-10.00%	(-12.4%, -7.4%)	-21.50%	(-26.7%, -16.0%)	5.40%	(-2.7%, +14.2%)
> 65	-20.20%	(-24.1%, -15.9%)	-56.10%	(-62.5%, -48.7%)	-32.80%	(-43.2%, -20.6%)

* Intervalo de confianza al 95 % a través del modelo de regresión de Poisson (Kleinbaum, 1988).

Tabla 5

Recetas Utilizadas por los Asegurados* con Diagnóstico de Asma por Categoría de Medicamento

Tipo de medicamento	% de asegurados que utilizaron el medicamento	Promedio de medicamentos por género		Promedio de medicamentos por grupo de edad		
		Femenino	Masculino	< 17	18 - 44	> 45
Corticoesteroides inhalados	17.5%	0.30	0.27	0.19	0.31	0.45
Anti-inflamatorios	21.6%	0.31	0.43	0.62	0.16	0.17
Moduladores de leukotrienos	2.0%	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.05	0.10
Xantinas	39.3%	0.82	0.71	0.38	0.78	1.54
Beta-agonistas de larga duración	11.9%	0.28	0.23	0.05	0.33	0.55
Beta-agonistas de alivio rápido	65.9%	1.57	1.66	1.71	1.44	1.65
Anticolinérgicos	1.7%	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.07
Corticoesteroides sistémicos	48.8%	0.89	0.88	0.92	0.70	1.08
Combinaciones de medicamentos	20.3%	0.28	0.26	0.19	0.27	0.44
Todos los medicamentos	94.7%	4.54	4.51	4.07	4.05	6.06

* Medicamentos utilizados por los asegurados con cubierta de farmacia (58,887) para controlar el asma.

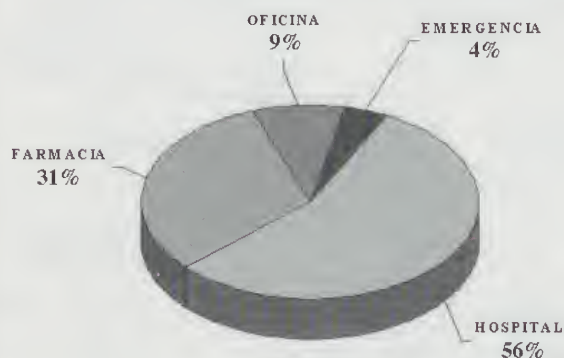
Discusión

Los resultados del presente estudio indican que la prevalencia de asma entre los asegurados (14.5%), fue menor a la prevalencia estimada por auto reporte en la ciudad de Ponce, Puerto Rico que reportó un (17.5%) (11). En términos generales, la mayor prevalencia de asma ha sido reportada en países occidentalizados comparados con países en desarrollo de Asia y África; en países de clima caliente comparados con áreas frías como Escandinavia y en ciertos lugares de Australia

y Nueva Zelanda comparado con Estados Unidos y Canadá. Estas diferencias en la prevalencia se evidencian aun en países con condiciones de vida similares (2). En este estudio, la prevalencia de asma en el género masculino fue de 13.5% mientras que en el femenino fue de 15.6%. En contraste, estudios de prevalencia realizados en Israel, reportan una prevalencia de 2.7% en hombres, mientras que en mujeres fue de 2.22% (16). En relación a la utilización de servicios, se ha reportado que tanto las visitas a médicos como a hospitales es significativamente mayor en el género femenino, particularmente en las adolescentes (7). Además, estudios de prevalencia en niños y adolescentes han reportado grandes diferencias entre países, por ejemplo, Australia reportó un 46% en el grupo de menores de 18 años, (17), muy similar a la de este estudio (43%), mientras que Finlandia tuvo una prevalencia de 1.8% (18).

En general, en este estudio se encontró una proporción de hospitalización de 6.2 por 100 mientras que el uso de servicios de emergencia fue de aproximadamente 11 por 100. Es decir, de cada 100 asmáticos asegurados hubo 6 asegurados con al menos una hospitalización y aproximadamente 11 asegurados con al menos una visita a sala de emergencia. Esto es menor que lo reportado en un estudio clínico de pacientes de asma en una comunidad de Brasil de bajo

Gráfica 2. Gasto Porcentual por Servicio de los Asegurados con Diagnóstico de Asma, 1996 - 1997



Fuente: Triple-S, Inc.; Unidad de Investigación y Bioestadística

nivel educativo y económico donde se reportó un 19.3% de hospitalizaciones y un 54.8% de visitas a sala de emergencias (19).

La mayor utilización de servicios médicos en salas de oficina y hospitalizaciones de los menores de 18 años encontrado en nuestro estudio podría ser un reflejo de la alta prevalencia de la condición en este grupo. Sin embargo, las razones para la mayor utilización de salas de emergencia en el grupo de adultos debe investigarse con más detalles. Se debe señalar, que un mayor contacto con ciertos servicios de salud podría ser un reflejo de políticas de manejo o de accesibilidad a los servicios de salud.

La epidemiología del asma está teniendo una rápida expansión, de la misma forma que ocurrió hace varias décadas con la epidemiología de enfermedades cardiovasculares y el cáncer. Entre las razones para ello se citan el aumento alarmante de la condición a nivel mundial, que en Europa, por ejemplo, varía desde un 4% hasta un 32% por año (20). Un paso necesario en el esclarecimiento de las causas asociadas para este aumento es el llevar a cabo comparaciones entre países. Encuestas internacionales recientes de la prevalencia de asma entre adultos han utilizado técnicas idénticas que facilitan estas comparaciones y que pueden proveer hipótesis relacionadas con las diferencias (21,22). Por otro lado, la educación del paciente asmático ha probado ser efectiva en reducir las visitas a salas de emergencia y hospitalizaciones, considerándose estos programas como costo-efectivos. Por ejemplo, después de un programa educativo en un grupo de pacientes asmáticos afiliados a un HMO en una comunidad de Boston, se obtuvo una reducción de 79% en visitas a la sala de emergencia y de un 86% en las admisiones a hospitales (6). Además, otros beneficios se podrían derivar de la reducción de estos servicios tales como la disminución en la carga emocional del afectado y su familia así como mejorar la asistencia al trabajo o la escuela.

Estos hallazgos pueden servir de guía para iniciar campañas de educación dirigidas a los pacientes asmáticos que parecen utilizar estos servicios con mayor frecuencia. Actualmente, la compañía de seguros Triple-S, Inc. lleva a cabo un programa dirigido hacia la educación del paciente asmático conocido como El Asma y Tu Salud. Los objetivos de este programa son los siguientes: i) enseñar a las personas asmáticas a manejar y controlar su condición y ii) ayudar a las personas asmáticas a mejorar la calidad de vida.

Limitaciones

En Puerto Rico, las compañías aseguradoras pueden considerarse como una fuente muy importante para obtener un perfil epidemiológico inicial de las diferentes condiciones crónicas, independientemente

de las limitaciones en la información recopilada. Regularmente, los datos no se recogen para llevar a cabo investigaciones científicas por lo que el investigador tendrá limitaciones tanto en conseguir las características o variables necesarias para el estudio, así como en validar algunos de los datos existentes. Además, existen condiciones, como el asma, que presentan de por sí variaciones en los criterios de diagnóstico, por lo que la prevalencia podría variar dependiendo de la definición operacional que se utilice. Cabe señalar que diferentes estudios han encontrado que la prevalencia de asma obtenida a través del diagnóstico médico tiende a ser sustancialmente menor que la prevalencia verdadera de la condición (23-25). En este estudio, por ejemplo, el incluir personas solamente con medicamentos cuyo uso es reconocido para pacientes asmáticos podría incluir personas con otras condiciones pero a las que el médico indicó este tipo de medicamentos por diferentes razones. Al tener como criterio de selección el que fuesen dos o más medicamentos podría disminuir este posible efecto. Otro aspecto que se debe considerar es la representatividad de la población de asegurados bajo estudio con relación a la población general de Puerto Rico. La compañía de seguros Triple-S, Inc. tiene aproximadamente una sexta parte de la población de Puerto Rico bajo sus cubiertas de seguro de salud comercial, pero ciertos segmentos de la población tales como grupos específicos de edad, médico-indigentes y desempleados podrían no encontrarse adecuadamente representados. Por ejemplo, la distribución de ciertos grupos de edad tales como los de 65 años o más, que están cubiertos por Medicare podrían no estar representados en igual proporción que en la población general. Estas situaciones limitan la extrapolación de los hallazgos a la población general. Sin embargo, resultados similares en diferentes estudios de prevalencia nos sugieren que nuestros hallazgos son confiables. Por ejemplo, estudios realizados en hispanos en Estados Unidos han documentado una mayor prevalencia de asma en niños puertorriqueños y México-americanos (26,27). En este estudio, se encontró una mayor proporción de casos de asma en niños y jóvenes. De igual forma, hubo un gran número de visitas a médicos, hospitalizaciones y visitas a sala de emergencia en niños y adolescentes hecho reportado en países desarrollados y en vías de desarrollo y de clima caliente (7,26). La realización de estudios de prevalencia poblacional usando otras fuentes de información así como una definición estándar de la condición serían de gran utilidad para confirmar estos resultados.

Abstract:

Objective: To describe the prevalence and pattern of utilization of medical services in insureds of SSS with a diagnosis of asthma during 1996 and 1997.

Methods: The medical claims of SSS insureds whose main diagnosis was asthma (ICD-9 9 493-493.9) were selected

for analysis. The prevalence and medical service utilization (medical visits, emergency and hospital admissions) were estimated. Differences in health service utilization by age group were analyzed by the Poisson model.

Results: The asthma prevalence was 14.5%, being larger in patients younger than 18 years of age and in females. 54.3% of the asthmatic patients visited medical offices and the larger proportion of users was observed in the younger group (<18 years). However, the larger proportion of users of the emergency room was observed in the 18-44 age group, while the hospital admissions was larger in the 45-64 age group. More than half (56%) of the cost per service was attributed to hospital admissions while 31% was for pharmacy services. 65.9% of the insurers with asthma had prescriptions for short relief beta-antagonist.

Conclusions: The prevalence of asthma in this study was high and similar to rates of the disease reported in Puerto Ricans residing in the U. S. and in other areas of the island. Similarly, the prevalence differed by age in the utilization of medical services as well as the high cost of hospital admissions. Prevalence studies using other sources as well as a standard definition of the condition may be helpful to confirm these results.

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BRIEF SUMMARY

COMBIVIR® Tablets (lamivudine/zidovudine tablets)

The following is a brief summary only; see full prescribing information for complete product information.

WARNING: ZIDOVUDINE, ONE OF THE TWO ACTIVE INGREDIENTS IN COMBIVIR, HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH HEMATOLOGIC TOXICITY INCLUDING NEUTROPENIA AND SEVERE ANEMIA, PARTICULARLY IN PATIENTS WITH ADVANCED HIV DISEASE (SEE WARNINGS). PROLONGED USE OF ZIDOVUDINE HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH SYMPTOMATIC MYOPATHY.

LACTIC ACIDOSIS AND SEVERE HEPATOMEGALY WITH STEATOSIS, INCLUDING FATAL CASES, HAVE BEEN REPORTED WITH THE USE OF NUCLEOSIDE ANALOGUES ALONE OR IN COMBINATION, INCLUDING LAMIVUDINE, ZIDOVUDINE, AND OTHER ANTIRETROVIRALS (SEE WARNINGS).

INDICATIONS AND USAGE: COMBIVIR is indicated for the treatment of HIV infection.

Description of Clinical Studies: COMBIVIR. There have been no clinical trials conducted with COMBIVIR. See CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY for information about bioequivalence. One COMBIVIR Tablet given twice a day is an alternative regimen to EPIVIR Tablets 150 mg twice a day plus RETROVIR 600 mg per day in divided doses.

Lamivudine Plus Zidovudine: The NUCB3007 (CAESAR) study was conducted using EPIVIR 150-mg Tablets (150 mg b.i.d.) and RETROVIR 100-mg Capsules (2 x 100 mg t.i.d.). CAESAR was a multicenter, double-blind, placebo-controlled study comparing continued current therapy [zidovudine alone (62% of patients) or zidovudine with didanosine or zalcitabine (38% of patients)] to the addition of EPIVIR or EPIVIR plus an investigational non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor, randomized 1:2:1. A total of 1816 HIV-infected adults with 25 to 250 (median 122) CD4 cells/mm³ at baseline were enrolled; median age was 36 years, 87% were male, 84% were nucleoside-experienced, and 16% were therapy-naïve. The median duration on study was 12 months. Results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Patients (%) With At Least One HIV Disease-Progression Event or Death

Endpoint	Current Therapy (n = 460)	EPIVIR plus Current Therapy (n = 896)	EPIVIR plus a NNRTI* plus Current Therapy (n = 460)
HIV progression or death	90 (19.6%)	86 (9.6%)	41 (8.9%)
Death	27 (5.9%)	23 (2.6%)	14 (3.0%)

*An investigational non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor not approved in the United States.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: COMBIVIR Tablets are contraindicated in patients with previously demonstrated clinically significant hypersensitivity to any of the components of the product.

WARNINGS: COMBIVIR is a fixed-dose combination of lamivudine and zidovudine. Ordinarily, COMBIVIR should not be administered concomitantly with either lamivudine or zidovudine.

The complete prescribing information for all agents being considered for use with COMBIVIR should be consulted before combination therapy with COMBIVIR is initiated.

Bone Marrow Suppression: COMBIVIR should be used with caution in patients who have bone marrow compromise evidenced by granulocyte count <1000 cells/mm³ or hemoglobin <5 g/dL (see ADVERSE REACTIONS).

Frequent blood counts are strongly recommended in patients with advanced HIV disease who are treated with COMBIVIR. For HIV-infected individuals and patients with asymptomatic or early HIV disease, periodic blood counts are recommended.

Lactic Acidosis/Severe Hepatomegaly with Steatosis: Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported with the use of nucleoside analogues alone or in combination, including lamivudine, zidovudine, and other antiretrovirals. A majority of these cases have been in women. Obesity and prolonged nucleoside exposure may be risk factors. Particular caution should be exercised when administering COMBIVIR to any patient with known risk factors for liver disease; however, cases have also been reported in patients with no known risk factors. Treatment with COMBIVIR should be suspended in any patient who develops clinical or laboratory findings suggestive of lactic acidosis or pronounced hepatotoxicity (which may include hepatomegaly and steatosis even in the absence of marked transaminase elevations).

Myopathy: Myopathy and myositis, with pathological changes similar to that produced by HIV disease, have been associated with prolonged use of zidovudine, and therefore may occur with therapy with COMBIVIR.

PRECAUTIONS:

General: Reduction of doses of lamivudine is recommended for patients with low body weight (less than 50 kg or 110 lb); therefore patients with low body weight should not receive COMBIVIR.

Patients With HIV and Hepatitis B Virus Connection: In clinical trials and postmarketing experience, some patients with HIV infection who have chronic liver disease due to hepatitis B virus infection experienced clinical or laboratory evidence of recurrent hepatitis upon discontinuation of lamivudine. Consequences may be more severe in patients with decompensated liver disease.

Patients With Impaired Renal Function: Reduction of the dosages of lamivudine and zidovudine is recommended for patients with impaired renal function. Patients with creatinine clearance <50 mL/min should not receive COMBIVIR.

Information for Patients: COMBIVIR is not a cure for HIV infection and patients may continue to experience illnesses associated with HIV infection, including opportunistic infections. Patients should be advised that the use of COMBIVIR has not been shown to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. Patients should be informed that the major toxicities of COMBIVIR are neutropenia and/or anemia. They should be told of the extreme importance of having their blood counts followed closely while on therapy, especially for patients with advanced HIV disease. Patients should be advised of the importance of taking COMBIVIR as it is prescribed.

Drug Interactions: Coadministration of ganciclovir, interferon-alpha, and other bone marrow suppressive or cytotoxic agents may increase the hematologic toxicity of zidovudine (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY section of full prescribing information).

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, and Impairment of Fertility: Carcinogenicity:

Lamivudine: Lamivudine long-term carcinogenicity studies in mice and rats showed no evidence of carcinogenic potential at exposures up to 10 times (mice) and 58 times (rats) those observed in humans at the recommended therapeutic dose. **Zidovudine:** Zidovudine was administered orally at three dosage levels to separate groups of mice and rats (60 females and 60 males in each group). Initial single daily doses were 30, 60, and 120 mg/kg per day in mice and 80, 220, and 600 mg/kg per day in rats. The doses in mice were reduced to 20, 30, and 40 mg/kg per day after day 90 because of treatment-related anemia, whereas in rats only the high dose was reduced to 450 mg/kg per day on day 91 and then to 300 mg/kg per day on day 279.

In mice, seven late-appearing (after 19 months) vaginal neoplasms (five nonmetastasizing squamous cell carcinomas, one squamous cell papilloma, and one squamous polyp) occurred in animals given the highest dose. One late-appearing squamous cell papilloma occurred in the vagina of a middle-dose animal. No vaginal tumors were found at the lowest dose.

In rats, two late-appearing (after 20 months), nonmetastasizing vaginal squamous cell carcinomas occurred in animals given the highest dose. No vaginal tumors occurred at the low or middle dose in rats. No other drug-related tumors were observed in either sex of either species.

At doses that produced tumors in mice and rats, the estimated drug exposure (as measured by AUC) was approximately three times (mice) and 24 times (rat) the estimated human exposure at the recommended therapeutic dose of 100 mg every 4 hours.

Two transplacental carcinogenicity studies were conducted in mice. One study administered zidovudine at doses of 20 mg/kg per day or 40 mg/kg per day from gestation day 10 through parturition and lactation with dosing continuing in offspring for 24 months postnatally. The doses of zidovudine employed in this study produced zidovudine exposures approximately three times the estimated human exposure at recommended doses. After 24 months, at the highest dose, an increase in incidence of vaginal tumors was noted with no increase in tumors in the liver or lung or any other organ in either gender. These findings are consistent with results of the standard oral carcinogenicity study in mice, as described earlier. A second study administered zidovudine at maximum tolerated doses of 12.5 mg/day or 25 mg/day (~1000 mg/kg nonpregnant body weight or ~450 mg/kg of term body weight) to pregnant mice from days 12 through 18 of gestation. There was an increase in the number of tumors in the lung, liver, and female reproductive tracts in the offspring of mice receiving the higher dose level of zidovudine.

It is not known how predictive the results of rodent carcinogenicity studies may be for humans.

Mutagenicity: Lamivudine: Lamivudine was negative in a microbial mutagenicity screen, in an *in vitro* cell transformation assay, in a rat micronucleus test, in a rat bone marrow cytogenetic assay, and in an assay for unscheduled DNA synthesis in rat liver. It was mutagenic in a L5178Y/TK⁺ mouse lymphoma assay and clastogenic in a cytogenetic assay using cultured human lymphocytes.

Zidovudine: Zidovudine was mutagenic in a L5178Y/TK⁺ mouse lymphoma assay, positive in an *in vitro* cell transformation assay, clastogenic in a cytogenetic assay using cultured human lymphocytes, and positive in mouse and rat micronucleus tests after repeated doses. It was negative in a cytogenetic study in rats given a single dose.

Impairment of Fertility: Lamivudine: In a study of reproductive performance, lamivudine, administered to male and female rats at doses up to 130 times the usual adult dose based on body surface area considerations, revealed no evidence of impaired fertility (judged by conception rates) and no effect on the survival, growth, and development to weaning of the offspring.

Zidovudine: Zidovudine, administered to male and female rats at doses up to 7 times the usual adult dose based on body surface area considerations, had no effect on fertility judged by conception rates.

Pregnancy: Pregnancy Category C.

COMBIVIR® Tablets (lamivudine/zidovudine tablets): There are no adequate and well-controlled studies of COMBIVIR in pregnant women. Reproduction studies with lamivudine and zidovudine have been performed in animals (see Lamivudine and Zidovudine sections below). COMBIVIR should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefits outweigh the risks.

Lamivudine: Reproduction studies with orally administered lamivudine have been performed in rats and rabbits at 130 and 60 times, respectively, the usual adult dose (based on relative body surface area) and have revealed no evidence of teratogenicity. Some evidence of early embryolethality was seen in the rabbit at doses similar to those produced by the usual adult dose and higher, but there was no indication of this effect in the rat at orally administered doses up to 130 times the usual adult dose. Studies in pregnant rats and rabbits showed that lamivudine is transferred to the fetus through the placenta.

Zidovudine: Reproduction studies with orally administered zidovudine in the rat and in the rabbit at doses up to 500 mg/kg per day revealed no evidence of teratogenicity with zidovudine. Zidovudine treatment resulted in embryo/fetal toxicity as evidenced by an increase in the incidence of fetal resorptions in rats given 150 or 450 mg/kg per day and rabbits given 500 mg/kg per day. The doses used in the teratology studies resulted in peak zidovudine plasma concentrations (after one-half of the daily dose) in rats 66 to 226 times, and in rabbits 12 to 87 times, mean steady-state peak human plasma concentrations (after one-sixth of the daily dose) achieved with the recommended daily dose (100 mg every 4 hours). In an additional teratology study in rats, a dose of 3000 mg/kg per day (very near the oral median lethal dose in rats of 3683 mg/kg) caused marked maternal toxicity and an increase in the incidence of fetal malformations. This dose resulted in peak zidovudine plasma concentrations 350 times peak human plasma concentrations. No evidence of teratogenicity was seen in this experiment at doses of 600 mg/kg per day or less. Two rodent carcinogenicity studies were conducted (see Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility).

Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry: To monitor maternal-fetal outcomes of pregnant women exposed to COMBIVIR, and other antiretroviral agents, an Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry has been established. Physicians are encouraged to register patients by calling 1-800-258-4263.

Nursing Mothers: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that HIV-infected mothers not breastfeed their infants to avoid risking postnatal transmission of HIV infection.

COMBIVIR: Zidovudine is excreted in breast milk (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Pharmacokinetics: Nursing Mothers subsection of full prescribing information); however, no data are available on COMBIVIR or lamivudine. Therefore, there is a potential for adverse effects in nursing infants. **Mothers should be instructed not to breastfeed if they are receiving COMBIVIR.**

Pediatric Use: COMBIVIR should not be administered to pediatric patients less than 12 years of age because it is a fixed-dose combination that cannot be adjusted for this patient population.

ADVERSE REACTIONS:

Lamivudine Plus Zidovudine Administered As Separate Formulations: In four randomized, controlled trials of EPIVIR 300 mg per day plus RETROVIR 600 mg per day, the following selected clinical and laboratory adverse events were observed (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Selected Clinical Adverse Events (≥5% Frequency) in Four Controlled Clinical Trials With EPIVIR 300 mg/day and RETROVIR 600 mg/day

Adverse Event	EPIVIR plus RETROVIR (n = 251)
Body as a whole	
Headache	35%
Malaise & fatigue	27%
Fever or chills	10%
Digestive	
Nausea	33%
Diarrhea	18%
Nausea & vomiting	13%
Anorexia and/or decreased appetite	10%
Abdominal pain	9%
Abdominal cramps	6%
Dyspepsia	5%
Nervous system	
Neuropathy	12%
Insomnia & other sleep disorders	11%
Quininess	10%
Depressive disorders	9%
Respiratory	
Nasal signs & symptoms	20%
Cough	18%
Skin	
Skin rashes	9%
Musculoskeletal	
Musculoskeletal pain	12%
Myalgia	8%
Arthralgia	5%

Pancreatitis was observed in three of the 656 adult patients (<0.5%) who received EPIVIR in controlled clinical trials. Selected laboratory abnormalities observed during therapy are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Frequencies of Selected Laboratory Abnormalities Among Adults in Four Controlled Clinical Trials of EPIVIR 300 mg/day plus RETROVIR 600 mg/day*

Test (Abnormal Level)	EPIVIR plus RETROVIR % (n)
Neutropenia (ANC<750/mm ³)	7.2% (237)
Anemia (Hgb<8.0 g/dL)	2.9% (241)
Thrombocytopenia (platelets<50,000/mm ³)	0.4% (240)
ALT (>5.0 x ULN)	3.7% (241)
AST (>5.0 x ULN)	1.7% (241)
Bilirubin (>2.5 x ULN)	0.8% (241)
Amylase (>2.0 x ULN)	4.2% (72)

ULN = Upper limit of normal.

ANC = Absolute neutrophil count.

n = Number of patients assessed.

*Frequencies of these laboratory abnormalities were higher in patients with mild laboratory abnormalities at baseline.

Observed During Clinical Practice: In addition to adverse events reported from clinical trials, the following events have been identified during post-approval use of EPIVIR and/or RETROVIR. Because they are reported voluntarily from a population of unknown size, estimates of frequency cannot be made. These events have been chosen for inclusion due to a combination of their seriousness, frequency of reporting, or potential causal connection to EPIVIR and/or RETROVIR.

Endocrine and Metabolic: Hyperglycemia.

General: Sensitization reactions (including anaphylaxis), vasculitis.

Hepatobiliary Tract and Pancreas: Lactic acidosis and hepatic steatosis (see WARNINGS), pancreatitis.

Musculoskeletal: Muscle weakness, CPK elevation, rhabdomyolysis.

Nervous: Seizures.

Skin: Alopecia, erythema multiforme, Stevens-Johnson syndrome, urticaria.

OVERDOSAGE:

COMBIVIR: There is no known antidote for COMBIVIR.

Lamivudine: One case of an adult ingesting 6 grams of lamivudine was reported; there were no clinical signs or symptoms noted and hematologic tests remained normal. It is not known whether lamivudine can be removed by peritoneal dialysis or hemodialysis.

Zidovudine: Acute overdoses of zidovudine have been reported in pediatric patients and adults. These involved exposures up to 50 grams. The only consistent findings were nausea and vomiting. Other reported occurrences included headache, dizziness, drowsiness, lethargy, confusion, and one report of a grand mal seizure. Hematologic changes were transient. All patients recovered. Hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis appear to have a negligible effect on the removal of zidovudine while elimination of its primary metabolite, GZDV, is enhanced.

OSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: The recommended oral dose of COMBIVIR for adults and adolescents (at least 12 years of age) is one tablet (containing 150 mg of lamivudine and 300 mg of zidovudine) twice daily.

Dose Adjustment: Because it is a fixed-dose combination, COMBIVIR should not be prescribed for patients requiring dosage adjustment such as those with reduced renal function (creatinine clearance <50 mL/min), those with low body weight (<50 kg or 110 lb), or those experiencing dose-limiting adverse events.

US Patent Nos. 5,047,407; 4,818,538; 4,828,838; 4,724,232; 4,833,130; and 4,837,208

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Lamivudine is manufactured under agreement from BioChem Pharma

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March 1999/RL-685



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+ NNRTI

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References: 1. Gulick R, Mellors J, Havlir D, et al. Treatment with indinavir (IDV), zidovudine (ZDV) and lamivudine (3TC): three-year follow-up. Sixth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections; Jan. 31-Feb. 4, 1999. Poster 388. 2. Data on file, Glaxo Wellcome Inc.

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O N E T A B L E T B I D

Most frequent adverse events are headache (35%), nausea (33%), malaise/fatigue (27%), and nasal signs and symptoms (20%). Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported. Zidovudine has been associated with hematologic toxicity including neutropenia and severe anemia, especially in advanced HIV disease, and with symptomatic myopathy after prolonged use.

Please see brief summary for COMBIVIR on the following page.

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HIV

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Estudios Originales:

Primary Cardiac Osteogenic Sarcoma Treated with Heart Transplantation

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Abstract: Primary cardiac osteogenic sarcomas are rare malignancies. Less than 30 cases have been reported in the literature. Most of them have been found in the left side of the heart.

We report a case of a primary osteogenic sarcoma of the left atrium in a 28 year old female. She underwent resection of the tumor and subsequently heart transplantation. To our knowledge this is the second patient with a primary cardiac osteosarcoma who underwent heart transplantation.

Key Words: primary cardiac osteosarcoma; primary cardiac neoplasm; heart transplantation; osteogenic sarcoma; cardiac malignancy; heart/cardiac tumor

Case Report

A 28 year old, white female, with history of asthma, experienced dyspnea on exertion that was attributed to her asthma and for which she was treated for 6 weeks without any improvement. By this time the shortness of breath increased not only on exertion but when she was lying down, especially on her left side, with some improvement when sitting up. She had some occasional stabbing pain in her left hemithorax and in the interscapular area. There was no history of pedal edema. The patient denied smoking and drug use. Past medical history and review of systems were negative. She was admitted to a small community hospital and then transferred to our facility for further management.

On physical examination she was a well nourished female in mild respiratory distress, afebrile, with pulse of 84 bpm, a respiratory rate of 25/min, and blood pressure of 108/74 mmHg. There was no jugular venous distention nor carotid bruits. The lungs had

minimal bibasilar rales. There was a 2/6 systolic murmur best heard at the apex and the left sternal border, no diastolic murmur. The pulmonary valve sound was accentuated and there were no rubs. The abdominal examination was benign. No edema in the ankles or calf tenderness was encountered.

The electrocardiogram showed a normal sinus rhythm with non specific T wave abnormalities in III, AVE, V1-V3. A chest roentgenogram was compatible with mild pulmonary edema. A transthoracic echocardiogram revealed a large mass within the substance of the left atrium with incomplete obstruction of the mitral valve. A small pericardial effusion was noted, in addition to mild aortic and mitral regurgitation. The routine blood tests were within normal limits.

In light of the symptoms and the echocardiographic findings, the patient underwent cardiac surgery. A fungating firm tumor was found, filling the inferior portion of the left atrial chamber with near total obstruction of the inflow to the left atrium and the mitral valve apparatus. The entire tumor was resected. It measured 6.5 x 5.0 cm. in diameter and had a significant invasive and inflammatory reaction to the surface of the endocardium. The histological evaluation of the tissue represented a high grade pleomorphic sarcoma with osteocartilagenous differentiation. A complete metastatic work up was performed on the patient and it was normal.

Due to the invasive nature of the tumor, one month later, the patient had a successful cardiac transplant. During surgery recurrence of the tumor with some extension to a pulmonary vein was noted. She recovered quickly from the surgery and 5 months later she returned to her usual job. On the sixth month after

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her transplant, she presented with left hemiparesis. Head computed tomography scan and a magnetic resonance (MR) angiogram scan showed a tumor lesion in the right frontal lobe of the brain. The mass was resected and it was positively identified as metastasis from her cardiac mass. Radiotherapy was initiated. One month later, follow up MR imaging of the brain showed more areas suggestive of metastasis. Transesophageal echocardiogram identified a multilobulated, soft tissue density in the left atrium with a mobile component, extending into the pulmonary veins of the donor heart. These findings were felt to be consistent with recurrent sarcoma and possible thrombus in the atrium. Approximately 2 months later the patient died. The patient survived 11.5 months since the diagnosis.

Discussion

The presence of the osteosarcomas in the viscera is very rare, especially in the heart. Some authors believe that these are the result of unilateral development of a teratoma into osseous tissue. Other suggest that they may arise as fibrosarcomas with bone formation as a secondary characteristic. (1) Due to their common appearance in the left atrium they have been considered as a malignant transformation of myxomas, but this theory is not supported either in the literature review by Burke and Virmani (2), or the one conducted by us.

The osteogenic sarcomas are one of the rarest tumors of the heart. In the literature reviewed by the authors there are less than 30 cases reported, and of those only 6 cases are pure osteogenic sarcomas. (1-6) Most of them are found in the left atrium. The pleomorphism seen in these tumors is quite common including histologic types such as: osteoclastoma, fibrosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, rhabdomyosarcoma, angiosarcoma, liposarcoma, benign skeletal muscle and fibroelastic tissue. (2, 5) In our case, the tumor showed some of these histologic patterns.

Heart transplantation in patients with a history of primary cardiac malignancy has been performed sparingly. The current case represents, to our knowledge, the second patient with a primary cardiac osteogenic sarcoma who received a heart transplant. (3)

The suggestion that immunosuppressive therapy, necessary for the transplant, might play a role in the growth of micrometastases already present in the patient at the time of transplant is of utmost importance, (3, 7) as well as is to obtain surgical edges free of tumor. For these reasons, the role of heart transplantation as an alternative for treatment remains to be seen. Transplantation should not be ruled out completely because long-term survival has been reported by others, (8, 9) especially if the tumor is caught early.

Judicious evaluation should be performed when seeing and treating patients with malignant heart tumors. Osteogenic sarcomas, which are mostly left-sided tumors, should be kept in mind when a patient presents with such a lesion. Due to their poor outcome aggressive and expedite evaluation must be performed to differentiate them from other more common and relatively benign neoplasias appearing in the left atrium.

Abstracto: Los osteosarcomas osteogénicos primarios del corazón son neoplasias malignas raras. En la literatura se han reportado menos de 30 casos. La mayoría se localizan en el lado izquierdo del corazón.

Aquí reportamos el caso de una paciente de 28 años de edad que se presentó con dicho tumor. La neoplasia se resecó y subsecuentemente se le hizo un trasplante de corazón. Éste constituye el segundo caso de un paciente con osteosarcoma cardiaco primario que recibe un trasplante de corazón.

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Zithromax®

(azithromycin for oral suspension)

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BRIEF SUMMARY

INDICATIONS AND USAGE

ZITHROMAX® (azithromycin) is indicated for the treatment of patients with mild to moderate infections (pneumonia, see WARNINGS) caused by susceptible strains of the designated microorganisms in the specific conditions listed below. As recommended dosages, durations of therapy, and applicable patient populations vary among these infections, please see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION for specific dosing recommendations.

Acute otitis media caused by *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Moraxella catarrhalis*, or *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (for specific dosage recommendation, see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION.)

Community-acquired pneumonia due to *Chlamydia pneumoniae*, *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, or *Streptococcus pneumoniae* in patients appropriate for oral therapy (for specific dosage recommendation, see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION.)

NOTE: Azithromycin should not be used in pediatric patients with pneumonia who are judged to be inappropriate for oral therapy because of moderate to severe illness or risk factors such as any of the following: patients with cystic fibrosis, patients with immunocompromised infections, patients with known or suspected bacteremia, patients requiring hospitalization, or patients with significant underlying health problems that may compromise their ability to respond to their illness (including immunodeficiency or functional asplenia).

Pharyngitis/tonsillitis caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes* as an alternative to first line therapy in individuals who cannot use first line therapy (for specific dosage recommendations, see DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION.)

NOTE: Penicillin by the intramuscular route is the usual drug of choice in the treatment of *Streptococcus pyogenes* infection and the prophylaxis of rheumatic fever. ZITHROMAX® is often effective in the eradication of susceptible strains of *Streptococcus pyogenes* from the nasopharynx. Because some strains are resistant to ZITHROMAX®, susceptibility tests should be performed when patients are treated with ZITHROMAX®. Data establishing efficacy of azithromycin in subsequent prevention of rheumatic fever are not available.

Appropriate culture and susceptibility tests should be performed before treatment to determine the causative organism and its susceptibility to azithromycin. Therapy with ZITHROMAX® may be initiated before results of these tests are known, once the results become available, antimicrobial therapy should be adjusted accordingly.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

ZITHROMAX® is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to azithromycin, erythromycin, or any macrolide antibiotic.

WARNINGS

Serious allergic reactions, including angioedema, anaphylaxis, and dermatologic reactions including Stevens Johnson Syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis have been reported rarely in patients on azithromycin therapy. Although rare, fatalities have been reported (See CONTRAINDICATIONS.) Despite initially successful symptomatic treatment of the allergic symptoms, when symptomatic therapy was discontinued, the allergic symptoms recurred soon thereafter in some patients without further azithromycin exposure. These patients required prolonged periods of observation and symptomatic treatment. The relationship of these episodes to the long tissue half-life of azithromycin and subsequent prolonged exposure to antigen is unknown at present.

If an allergic reaction occurs, the drug should be discontinued and appropriate therapy should be instituted. Physicians should be aware that reappearance of the allergic symptoms may occur when symptomatic therapy is discontinued.

In the treatment of pneumonia, azithromycin has only been shown to be safe and effective in the treatment of community-acquired pneumoniae due to *Chlamydia pneumoniae*, *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, or *Streptococcus pneumoniae* in patients appropriate for oral therapy. Azithromycin should not be used in patients with pneumonia who are judged to be inappropriate for oral therapy because of moderate to severe illness or risk factors such as any of the following: patients with cystic fibrosis, patients with immunocompromised infections, patients with known or suspected bacteremia, patients requiring hospitalization, elderly or debilitated patients, or patients with significant underlying health problems that may compromise their ability to respond to their illness (including immunodeficiency or functional asplenia).

Pseudomembranous colitis has been reported with nearly all antibacterial agents and may range in severity from mild to life-threatening. Therefore, it is important to consider this diagnosis in patients who present with diarrhea subsequent to the administration of antibacterial agents.

Treatment with antibacterial agents alters the normal flora of the colon and may permit overgrowth of clostridia. Studies indicate that a toxin produced by *Clostridium difficile* is a primary cause of "antibiotic-associated colitis."

After the diagnosis of pseudomembranous colitis has been established, therapeutic measures should be initiated. Mild cases of pseudomembranous colitis usually respond to discontinuation of the drug alone. In moderate to severe cases, consideration should be given to management with fluids and electrolytes, protein supplementation, and treatment with an antibacterial drug clinically effective against *Clostridium difficile* colitis.

PRECAUTIONS

General: Because azithromycin is principally eliminated via the liver, caution should be exercised when azithromycin is administered to patients with impaired hepatic function.

There are no data regarding azithromycin usage in patients with renal impairment; thus, caution should be exercised when prescribing azithromycin in these patients.

The following adverse events have not been reported in clinical trials with azithromycin, an azalide, however, they have been reported with macrolide products: ventricular arrhythmias, including ventricular tachycardia and torsades de pointes, in individuals with prolonged QT interval.

There has been a spontaneous report from the post-marketing experience of a patient with previous history of arrhythmias who experienced torsades de pointes and subsequent myocardial infarction following a course of azithromycin therapy. Information for Patients: Patients should be cautioned to take ZITHROMAX® suspension at least one hour prior to a meal or at least two hours after a meal. This medication should not be taken with food.

Patients should also be cautioned not to take aluminum- and magnesium-containing antacids and azithromycin simultaneously.

The patient should be directed to discontinue azithromycin immediately and contact a physician if any signs of an allergic reaction occur.

Org Interactions: Aluminum- and magnesium-containing antacids reduce the peak serum levels (late) but not the AUC (extent) of azithromycin absorption.

Administration of cimetidine (800 mg) two hours prior to azithromycin had no effect on azithromycin absorption.

Azithromycin did not affect the plasma levels or pharmacokinetics of theophylline administered as a single intravenous dose. The effect of azithromycin on the plasma levels or pharmacokinetics of theophylline administered in multiple doses resulting in therapeutic steady-state levels of theophylline is not known. However, concurrent use of macrolides and theophylline has been associated with increases in the serum concentrations of theophylline. Therefore, until further data are available, prudent medical practice dictates careful monitoring of plasma theophylline levels in patients receiving azithromycin and theophylline concomitantly.

Azithromycin did not affect the prothrombin time response to a single dose of warfarin. However, prudent medical practice dictates careful monitoring of prothrombin time in all patients treated with azithromycin and warfarin concomitantly. Concurrent use of macrolides and warfarin in clinical practice has been associated with increased anticoagulant effects.

The following drug interactions have not been reported in clinical trials with azithromycin; however, no specific drug interaction studies have been performed to evaluate potential drug-drug interaction. Nonetheless, they have been observed with macrolide products. Until further data are developed regarding drug interactions with azithromycin and these drugs are used concomitantly, careful monitoring of patients is advised.

Digoxin-elevated digoxin levels.

Ergotamine or dihydroergotamine-acute ergot toxicity characterized by severe peripheral vasospasm and dysesthesia.

Triazolam-decrease the clearance of triazolam and thus may increase the pharmacologic effect of triazolam.

Drugs metabolized by the cytochrome P450 system-elevations of serum carbamazepine, terfenadine, cyclosporine, hexobarbital, and phenytoin levels.

Laboratory Test Interferences: There are no reported laboratory test interferences.

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility: Long term studies in animals have not been performed to evaluate carcinogenic potential. Azithromycin has shown no mutagenic potential in standard laboratory tests: mouse lymphoma assay, human lymphocyte clastogenic assay, and mouse bone marrow clastogenic assay. No evidence of impaired fertility due to azithromycin was found.

Pregnancy: Teratogenic Effects. Pregnancy Category II. Reproduction studies have been performed in rats and mice at doses up to moderately maternally toxic dose levels (i.e., 200 mg/kg/day). These doses, based on a mg/m² basis, are estimated to be 4 and 2 times, respectively, the human daily dose of 500 mg. In the animal studies, no evidence of harm to the fetus due to azithromycin was found. There are, however, no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Because animal reproduction studies are not always predictive of human response, azithromycin should be used during pregnancy only if clearly needed.

Nursing Mothers: It is not known whether azithromycin is excreted in human milk. Because many drugs are excreted in human milk, caution should be exercised when azithromycin is administered to a nursing woman.

Pediatric Use: (INDICATIONS AND USAGE.)

Acute Otitis Media (dosage regimen: 10 mg/kg on Day 1 followed by 5 mg/kg on Days 2-5). Safety and effectiveness in the treatment of children with otitis media under 6 months of age have not been established.

Community-Acquired Pneumonia (dosage regimen: 10 mg/kg on Day 1 followed by 5 mg/kg on Days 2-5). Safety and effectiveness in the treatment of children with community-acquired pneumonia under 6 months of age have not been established. Safety and effectiveness for pneumonia due to *Chlamydia pneumoniae* and *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* were documented in pediatric clinical trials. Safety and effectiveness for pneumonia due to *Haemophilus influenzae* and *Streptococcus pneumoniae* were not documented bacteriologically in the pediatric clinical trial due to difficulty in obtaining specimens. Use of azithromycin for these two microorganisms is supported, however, by evidence from adequate and well-controlled studies in adults.

Pharyngitis/Tonsillitis (dosage regimen: 12 mg/kg on Days 1-5). Safety and effectiveness in the treatment of children with pharyngitis/tonsillitis under 2 years of age have not been established.

Studies evaluating the use of repeated courses of therapy have not been conducted.

Geriatric Use: Pharmacokinetic parameters in older volunteers (65-85 years old) were similar to those in younger volunteers (18-40 years old) for the 5-day therapeutic regimen. Dosage adjustment does not appear to be necessary for older patients with normal renal and hepatic function receiving treatment with this dosage regimen.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

In clinical trials, most of the reported side effects were mild to moderate in severity and were reversible upon discontinuation of the drug. Approximately 0.7% of the patients (adults and children) from the multiple-dose clinical trials discontinued ZITHROMAX® (azithromycin) therapy because of treatment-related side effects. Most of the side effects leading to discontinuation were related to the gastrointestinal tract, e.g., nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain. Potentially serious side effects of angioedema and cholestatic jaundice were reported rarely.

Children: Multiple-dose regimens: Overall, the most common side effects in adult patients receiving a multiple-dose regimen of ZITHROMAX® were related to the gastrointestinal system with diarrhea/loose stools (5%), nausea (3%), and abdominal pain (3%) being the most frequently reported.

No other side effects occurred in patients on the multiple-dose regimen of ZITHROMAX® with a frequency greater than 1%.

Side effects that occurred with a frequency of 1% or less included the following:

Cardiovascular: Palpitations, chest pain.

Gastrointestinal: Dyspepsia, flatulence, vomiting, melena, and cholestatic jaundice.

Genitourinary: Monilia, vaginitis, and nephritis.

Nervous System: Dizziness, headache, vertigo, and somnolence.

General: Fatigue.

Allergic: Rash, photosensitivity, and angioedema.

Single 1-gram dose regimen: Overall, the most common side effects in patients receiving a single dose regimen of 1 gram of ZITHROMAX® were related to the gastrointestinal system and were more frequently reported than in patients receiving the multiple-dose regimen.

Side effects that occurred in patients on the single one-gram dosing regimen of ZITHROMAX® with a frequency of 1% or greater included diarrhea/loose stools (7%), nausea (5%), abdominal pain (5%), vomiting (2%), dyspepsia (1%), and vaginitis (1%).

Single 2-gram dose regimen: Overall, the most common side effects in patients receiving a single 2-gram dose of ZITHROMAX® were related to the gastrointestinal system. Side effects that occurred in patients in this study with a frequency of 1% or greater included nausea (18%), diarrhea/loose stools (14%), vomiting (7%), abdominal pain (7%), vaginitis (2%), dyspepsia (1%), and dizziness (1%). The majority of these complaints were mild in nature.

Children: Multiple-dose regimens: The types of side effects in children were comparable to those seen in adults, with different incidence rates for the two dosage regimens recommended in children.

Acute Otitis Media: For the recommended dosage regimen of 10 mg/kg on Day 1 followed by 5 mg/kg on Days 2-5, the most frequent side effects attributed to treatment were diarrhea/loose stools (2%), abdominal pain (2%), vomiting (1%), and nausea (1%).

Community-Acquired Pneumonia: For the recommended dosage regimen of 10 mg/kg on Day 1 followed by 5 mg/kg on Days 2-5, the most frequent side effects attributed to treatment were diarrhea/loose stools (5.8%), abdominal pain, vomiting, and nausea (1.9% each), and rash (1.6%).

Pharyngitis/Tonsillitis: For the recommended dosage regimen of 12 mg/kg on Days 1-5, the most frequent side effects attributed to treatment were diarrhea/loose stools (6%), vomiting (5%), abdominal pain (3%), nausea (2%), and headache (1%).

With either treatment regimen, no other side effects occurred in children treated with ZITHROMAX® with a frequency of greater than 1%. Side effects that occurred with a frequency of 1% or less included the following:

Cardiovascular: Chest pain.

Gastrointestinal: Dyspepsia, constipation, anorexia, flatulence, and gastritis.

Nervous System: Headache (otitis media dosage), hyperkinesia, dizziness, agitation, nervousness, insomnia.

General: Fever, fatigue, malaise.

Allergic: Rash.

Site and Appendages: Pruritus, urticaria.

Special Senses: Conjunctivitis.

Post-Marketing Experience: Adverse events reported with azithromycin during the post-marketing period in adult and/or pediatric patients for which a causal relationship may not be established include:

Allergic: Arthralgia, edema, urticaria.

Cardiovascular: Arrhythmias including ventricular tachycardia.

Gastrointestinal: Anorexia, constipation, dyspepsia, flatulence, vomiting/diarrhea rarely resulting in dehydration.

General: Asthenia, paresthesia.

Genitourinary: Interstitial nephritis and acute renal failure.

Liver/Biliary: Abnormal liver function including hepatitis and cholestatic jaundice.

Nervous System: Convulsions.

Skin/Appendages: Rarely serious skin reactions including erythema multiforme, Stevens Johnson Syndrome, and toxic epidermal necrolysis.

Special Senses: Hearing disturbances including hearing loss, deafness, and/or tinnitus, rare reports of taste disturbances. **Laboratory Abnormalities:** Adults: Significant abnormalities (respective of drug relationship) occurring during the clinical trials were reported as follows: with an incidence of 1-2%, elevated serum creatine phosphokinase, potassium, ALT (SGPT), GGT, and AST (SGOT), with an incidence of less than 1%, leukopenia, neutropenia, decreased platelet count, elevated serum alkaline phosphatase, bilirubin, BUN, creatinine, blood glucose, LDH, and phosphate.

When follow-up was provided, changes in laboratory tests appeared to be reversible.

In multiple-dose clinical trials involving more than 3000 patients, 3 patients discontinued therapy because of treatment-related liver enzyme abnormalities and 1 because of a renal function abnormality.

Children: Significant abnormalities (respective of drug relationship) occurring during clinical trials were all reported at a frequency of less than 1%, but were similar in type to the adult patient.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION (See INDICATIONS AND USAGE.)

Acute Otitis Media and Community-Acquired Pneumonia: The recommended dose of ZITHROMAX® for oral suspension for the treatment of children with acute otitis media and community-acquired pneumonia is 10 mg/kg as a single dose on the first day (not to exceed 500 mg/day) followed by 5 mg/kg on days 2 through 5 (not to exceed 250 mg/day).

Pharyngitis/Tonsillitis: The recommended dose for children with pharyngitis/tonsillitis is 12 mg/kg once a day for 5 days (not to exceed 500 mg/day).

ZITHROMAX® for oral suspension should be given at least 1 hour before or 2 hours after a meal. ZITHROMAX® for oral suspension should not be taken with food.

More detailed professional information available on request.
Revised January 1997

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A diferencia de otros antibióticos, Zithromax se administra solamente una vez al día por cinco días. Y cinco días son tan efectivos como la terapia convencional de diez días porque el efecto de Zithromax continúa por varios días después de la última dosis.

Zithromax tiene un agradable sabor a cereza que a los niños les gusta y se tolera bien. Los efectos secundarios más comunes son diarrea (2%), dolor abdominal (2%), vómitos (1%) y náusea (1%). Aunque las reacciones alérgicas son poco frecuentes, de ocurrir, descontinúe el uso de este medicamento y consulte con su profesional de la salud. Para detalles completos, véase un breve resumen en la próxima página.

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Estudios Originales:

Prevalence of Hepatitis C Virus Infection at three hemodialysis units in the Western Region of Puerto Rico

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Justo González-Trápaga, MD**; Jorge Weber-Acevedo, MD**;
Enrique Lefevre-Ramos, MD**; Efraín Flores-De Hostos, MD, FACP**;
Francisco Jaume-Anselmi, MD, FACP***; José Ramírez-Rivera, MD, FACP****

Abstract

Objective: In the United States Hepatitis C virus infection (HCV) affects approximately 20 percent of hemodialysis patients but its prevalence in Puerto Rico has not been established. We have sought to determine the prevalence of HCV infection in a homogenous sample of patients on hemodialysis in the Western Region of Puerto Rico and to identify its risks factors.

Methods: All patients in the hemodialysis units of Aguadilla, Mayagüez and San Germán, during December 1997 to March 1998, completed a written questionnaire in which they were asked about transfusions, multiple sexual partners, IV drugs use, tattooing, occupation, imprisonment, organ transplantation and years on hemodialysis. Serum samples were analysed for HCV antibodies by an enzyme-linked immunoadsorbent assay (ELISA). Sera with positive results for HCV were subjected to a confirmatory test by the polymerase chain reaction (PCR).

Results: Thirteen of the 376 (3%) subjects had a positive ELISA (one patient died prior the confirmatory test with PCR). Six out of the twelve patients had a positive PCR. Two had been transfused. Three were illicit IV drug users and one had received a renal transplant. The liver biopsies in all patients showed chronic hepatitis and in two there was cirrhosis.

Conclusions: Our prevalence was two percent. As reported elsewhere blood transfusion, organ transplantation and illicit IV drug abuse were the major risk factors for HCV infection in our patients. Nosocomial factors were irrelevant in the results.

Key words: Hepatitis C Virus, hepatitis, hemodialysis, transfusion, intravenous drug abusers, renal transplantation, Puerto Rico.

Introduction

Nearly 4 million people in the United States are currently infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV). About 30,000 new infections are diagnosed each year and 8,000 infected people die annually. Complications of HCV infection are the major reason for liver transplantation in the United States (1).

The virus is transmitted by parenteral means (transfusion, IV drug abuse, single needle-stick accidents). A community risk factor is contact with multiple sexual partners (2). Hemodialysis is another important risk factor. In the United States an average of 20% of patients who receive renal hemodialysis are infected with HCV, but the incidence of infection varies widely according to geographic location (3). About 60% - 80% of HCV infected patients progress to chronic hepatitis and at least 20% of patients with chronic hepatitis develop cirrhosis (4).

We studied the prevalence of HCV infection and the associated risk factors in patients undergoing hemodialysis in the Western Region of Puerto Rico from December 1997 to March 1998.

Methods

All patients in the hemodialysis units of Aguadilla, Mayagüez and San Germán completed a written questionnaire in which they were asked about transfusions, multiple sexual partners, IV drugs use, tattooing, occupation, imprisonment, organ transplantation and years on hemodialysis. Serum samples were analyzed for HCV antibodies by enzyme-linked immunoadsorbent assay (ELISA). Sera with positive

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results for HCV were subjected to a confirmatory test by the polymerase chain reaction (PCR). Liver biopsies were performed in all patients with a positive PCR. Prevalence of the HCV infection was calculated dividing the number of patients with positive PCR by the total population from the three hemodialysis units and multiplying the result by 100.

Results

Three hundred and seventy-six (376) patients, the total population from three hemodialysis units in the Western part of Puerto Rico, participated in the study. Thirteen (3%) had a positive ELISA. One patient died prior to the confirmatory test with PCR. Six (50%) of the remaining 12 patients had a positive PCR. Two of six (33%) patients had received transfusions in the last 8 years. Three had not received transfusions but were IV drug users. One had received a renal transplant. The liver biopsy in all HCV infected patients by PCR showed chronic hepatitis and two of these 6 patients had cirrhosis. Prevalence of HCV infection was two percent.

Discussion

The prevalence of HCV infection within different dialysis units and in different parts of the world is quite variable. There is a reported prevalence of 37% in Belgium, 24% in Venezuela, 21% in South Africa, 19.6% in Italy and 8.9% in Austria (5-9). In these patients blood transfusion, intravenous drug abuse and organ transplantation were risk factors for HCV infection (10).

Our prevalence of two percent of HCV infection among patients in hemodialysis is distinctly low. These patients, however, showed histologic evidence of chronic hepatitis, two of them with cirrhosis. As reported elsewhere, blood transfusion and illicit IV drug abuse were the major risk factors for HCV infection in our patients. Nosocomial factors were irrelevant in the results.

Although some success in the treatment of HCV infection with interferon alpha has been reported, treatment is not indicated in all cases. The rate of sustained response with this treatment is only 10 to 20 percent. In elderly patients with cirrhosis long term response is even lower (11). Few dialysis patients with HCV infection live long enough to manifest the complications of cirrhosis. Because the yearly mortality among patients being treated with dialysis is, on average, 25 percent (12), clinical relevance of hepatitis C in these patients is yet to be defined (13).

Resumen:

Propósito: En los Estados Unidos el virus de la Hepatitis C (HCV) afecta el 20 por ciento de los pacientes en

hemodiálisis, pero su prevalencia en estos pacientes en Puerto Rico no ha sido establecida. Nuestro propósito fue determinar la prevalencia de esta infección en los pacientes de los programas de hemodiálisis en el Oeste de Puerto Rico y describir los factores de riesgo.

Métodos: Todos los pacientes en las unidades de hemodiálisis de Aguadilla, Mayagüez y San Germán durante los meses de diciembre de 1997 a marzo de 1998 completaron un cuestionario donde se les preguntaba acerca de transfusiones, múltiples parejas sexuales, abuso de drogas endovenosas, tatuajes, ocupación, encarcelamientos, trasplante de órganos y años en hemodiálisis. Se analizaron muestras de suero para anticuerpos de HCV por un ensayo de inmunoabsorbencia (ELISA). Se sometieron sueros con resultados positivos a confirmación por la prueba de reacción de polimerasa en cadena (PCR).

Resultados: Trece de los 373 (3%) pacientes tuvieron una prueba positiva de ELISA (un paciente murió antes de la prueba confirmatoria de PCR). Seis de los 12 pacientes tuvieron una prueba de PCR positiva. Dos habían sido transfundidos. Tres habían usado drogas ilícitas endovenosas y uno era receptor de un trasplante renal. Las biopsias de hígado de todos los pacientes demostraron hepatitis crónica y en dos se identificó cirrosis.

Conclusiones: Nuestra prevalencia fue de 2%. Al igual que se ha reportado en otras investigaciones las transfusiones de sangre, el abuso de drogas endovenosas y trasplante de órganos fueron los factores de riesgo para la infección del virus de la Hepatitis C. Los factores nosocomiales fueron irrelevantes en nuestros resultados.

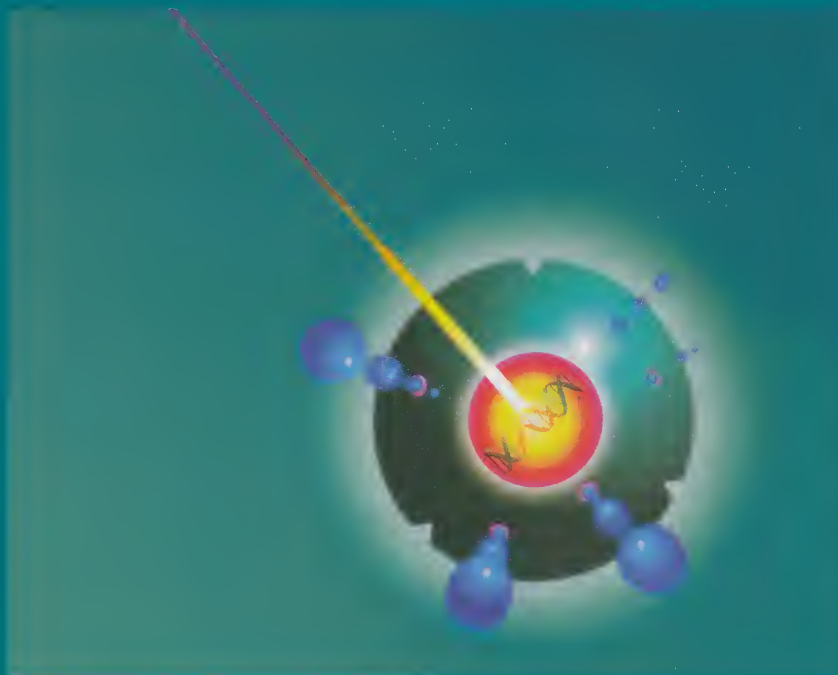
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INDICATIONS AND USAGE

Avandia is indicated as monotherapy as an adjunct to diet and exercise to improve glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus. Avandia is also indicated for use in combination with metformin when diet, exercise, and/or metformin alone do not result in adequate glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes. For patients inadequately controlled with a maximum dose of metformin, Avandia should be added to, rather than substituted for, metformin. Management of type 2 diabetes should include diet control. Caloric restriction, weight loss, and exercise are essential for the proper treatment of the diabetic patient because they help improve insulin sensitivity. This is important not only in the primary treatment of type 2 diabetes, but also in maintaining the efficacy of drug therapy. Prior to initiation of therapy with Avandia (rosiglitazone maleate), secondary causes of poor glycemic control, e.g., infection should be investigated and treated.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Avandia is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to this product or any of its components.

PRECAUTIONS

General
Due to its mechanism of action, Avandia is active only in the presence of insulin. Therefore, Avandia should not be used in patients with type 1 diabetes or for the treatment of diabetic ketoacidosis.

Ovulation: Avandia, like other thiazolidinediones, may result in resumption of ovulation in premenopausal, anovulatory women with insulin resistance. As a consequence of their improved insulin sensitivity, these patients may be at risk for pregnancy if adequate contraception is not used. Although hormonal imbalance has been seen in preclinical studies (see Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility), the clinical significance of this finding is not known. If unexpected menstrual dysfunction occurs, the benefits of continued therapy with Avandia should be reviewed.

Hematologic: Across all controlled clinical studies, decreases in hemoglobin and hematocrit (mean decreases in individual studies <1.0 gram/dL and 3.3%, respectively) were observed for both Avandia alone and in combination with metformin. The changes occurred primarily during the first 4 to 8 weeks of therapy and remained relatively constant thereafter. White blood cell counts also decreased slightly in patients treated with Avandia. The observed changes may be related to the increased plasma volume observed with treatment with Avandia and have not been associated with any significant hematologic clinical effects (see ADVERSE REACTIONS, Laboratory Abnormalities).

Edema: Avandia should be used with caution in patients with edema. In a clinical study in healthy volunteers who received Avandia 8 mg once daily for 8 weeks, there was a statistically significant increase in median plasma volume (1.8 mL/kg) compared to placebo.

In controlled clinical trials of patients with type 2 diabetes, mild to moderate edema was reported in patients treated with Avandia (See ADVERSE REACTIONS).

Use in Patients with Heart Failure: In preclinical studies, thiazolidinediones including rosiglitazone, cause plasma volume expansion and pre-load-induced cardiac hypertrophy. Two ongoing echocardiography studies in patients with type 2 diabetes (a 52-week study with Avandia 4 mg twice daily [N=86] and a 26-week study with 8 mg once daily [N=90]), have shown no deleterious alteration in cardiac structure or function. These studies were designed to detect a change in left ventricular mass of 10% or more.

Patients with New York Heart Association (NYHA) Class 3 and 4 cardiac status were not studied during the clinical trials. Avandia is not indicated in patients with NYHA Class 3 and 4 cardiac status unless the expected benefit is judged to outweigh the potential risk.

Hepatic Effects: Another drug of the thiazolidinedione class, troglitazone, has been associated with idiosyncratic hepatotoxicity, and very rare cases of liver failure, liver transplants, and death have been reported during postmarketing clinical use. In pre-approval controlled clinical trials in patients with type 2 diabetes, troglitazone was more frequently associated with clinically significant elevations of hepatic enzymes (ALT>3X upper limit of normal) compared to placebo, and very rare cases of reversible jaundice were reported.

In clinical studies in 4598 patients treated with Avandia, encompassing approximately 3600 patient years of exposure, there was no evidence of drug-induced hepatotoxicity or elevation of ALT levels.

In controlled trials, 0.2% of patients treated with Avandia had elevations in ALT >3X the upper limit of normal compared to 0.2% on placebo and 0.5% on active comparators. The ALT elevations in patients treated with Avandia were reversible and were not clearly causally related to therapy with Avandia (rosiglitazone maleate).

Although available clinical data show no evidence of Avandia-induced hepatotoxicity or ALT elevations, rosiglitazone is structurally very similar to troglitazone, which has been associated with idiosyncratic hepatotoxicity and rare cases of liver failure, liver transplants, and death. Pending the availability of the results of additional large, long-term controlled clinical trials and postmarketing safety data following wide clinical use of Avandia to more fully define its hepatic safety profile, it is recommended that patients treated with Avandia undergo periodic monitoring of liver enzymes. Liver enzymes should be checked prior to the initiation of therapy with Avandia in all patients. Therapy with Avandia should not be initiated in patients with increased baseline liver enzyme levels (ALT>2.5X upper limit of normal). In patients with normal baseline liver enzymes, following initiation of therapy with Avandia, it is recommended that liver enzymes be monitored every 2 months for the first 12 months, and periodically thereafter. Patients with mildly elevated liver enzymes (ALT levels one to 2.5X upper limit of normal) at baseline or during therapy with Avandia should be evaluated to determine the cause of the liver enzyme elevation. Initiation of, or continuation of, therapy with Avandia in patients with mild liver enzyme elevations should proceed with caution and include appropriate close clinical follow-up, including more frequent liver enzyme monitoring, to determine if the liver enzyme elevations resolve or worsen. If at any time ALT levels increase to >3X upper limit of normal in patients on therapy with Avandia, liver enzyme levels should be rechecked as soon as possible. If ALT levels remain >3X the upper limit of normal, therapy with Avandia should be discontinued.

There are no data available to evaluate the safety of Avandia in patients who experience liver abnormalities, hepatic dysfunction, or jaundice while on troglitazone. Avandia should not be used in patients who experienced jaundice while taking troglitazone. For patients with normal hepatic enzymes who are switched from troglitazone to Avandia, a 1-week washout is recommended before starting therapy with Avandia.

If any patient develops symptoms suggesting hepatic dysfunction, which may include unexplained nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, anorexia and/or dark urine, liver enzymes should be checked. The decision whether to continue the patient on therapy with Avandia should be guided by clinical judgment pending laboratory evaluations. If jaundice is observed, drug therapy should be discontinued.

Laboratory Tests

Periodic fasting blood glucose and HbA1c measurements should be performed to monitor therapeutic response.

Liver enzyme monitoring is recommended prior to initiation of therapy with Avandia in all patients and periodically thereafter (See PRECAUTIONS, Hepatic Effects and ADVERSE REACTIONS, Serum/Transaminase Levels).

Information for Patients

Patients should be informed of the following:

Management of type 2 diabetes should include diet control. Caloric restriction, weight loss, and exercise are essential for the proper treatment of the diabetic patient because they help improve insulin sensitivity. This is important not only in the primary treatment of type 2 diabetes, but in maintaining the efficacy of drug therapy.

It is important to adhere to dietary instructions and to regularly have blood glucose and glycosylated hemoglobin tested. Patients should be informed that blood will be drawn to check their liver function prior to the start of

therapy and every 2 months for the first 12 months, and periodically thereafter. Patients with unexplained symptoms of nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, anorexia, or dark urine should immediately report these symptoms to their physician.

Avandia can be taken with or without meals.

Use of Avandia may cause resumption of ovulation in premenopausal, anovulatory women with insulin resistance. Therefore, contraceptive measures may need to be considered.

Drug Interactions

Drugs Metabolized by Cytochrome P450

In vitro drug metabolism studies suggest that rosiglitazone does not inhibit any of the major P450 enzymes at clinically relevant concentrations. In vitro data demonstrate that rosiglitazone is predominantly metabolized by CYP2C8, and to a lesser extent, 2C9.

Avandia (4 mg twice daily) was shown to have no clinically relevant effect on the pharmacokinetics of nifedipine and oral contraceptives (ethinylestradiol and norethindrone), which are predominantly metabolized by CYP3A4. **Glyburide:** Avandia (2 mg twice daily) taken concomitantly with glyburide (3.75 to 10 mg/day) for 7 days did not alter the mean steady-state 24-hour plasma glucose concentrations in diabetic patients stabilized on glyburide therapy.

Metformin: Concurrent administration of Avandia (2 mg twice daily) and metformin (500 mg twice daily) in healthy volunteers for 4 days had no effect on the steady-state pharmacokinetics of either metformin or rosiglitazone. **Acarbose:** Coadministration of acarbose (100 mg three times daily) for 7 days in healthy volunteers had no clinically relevant effect on the pharmacokinetics of a single oral dose of Avandia.

Digoxin: Repeat oral dosing of Avandia (8 mg once daily) for 14 days did not alter the steady-state pharmacokinetics of digoxin (0.375 mg once daily) in healthy volunteers.

Warfarin: Repeat dosing with Avandia had no clinically relevant effect on the steady-state pharmacokinetics of warfarin enantiomers.

Ethanol: A single administration of a moderate amount of alcohol did not increase the risk of acute hypoglycemia in type 2 diabetes mellitus patients treated with Avandia (rosiglitazone maleate).

Ranitidine: Pretreatment with ranitidine (150 mg twice daily for 4 days) did not alter the pharmacokinetics of either single oral or intravenous doses of rosiglitazone in healthy volunteers. These results suggest that the absorption of oral rosiglitazone is not altered in conditions accompanied by increases in gastrointestinal pH.

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility

Carcinogenesis: A 2-year carcinogenicity study was conducted in Charles River CD-1 mice at doses of 0.4, 1.5, and 5 mg/kg/day in the diet (highest dose equivalent to approximately 12 times human AUC at the maximum recommended human daily dose). Sprague-Dawley rats were dosed for 2 years by oral gavage at doses of 0.05, 0.3, and 2 mg/kg/day (highest dose equivalent to approximately 10 and 20 times human AUC at the maximum recommended human daily dose for male and female rats, respectively).

Rosiglitazone was not carcinogenic in the mouse. There was an increase in incidence of adipose hyperplasia in the mouse at doses 21.5 mg/kg/day (approximately 2 times human AUC at the maximum recommended human daily dose). In rats, there was a significant increase in the incidence of benign adipose tissue tumors (lipomas) at doses 20.3 mg/kg/day (approximately 2 times human AUC at the maximum recommended human daily dose). These proliferative changes in both species are considered due to the persistent pharmacological overstimulation of adipose tissue.

Mutagenesis: Rosiglitazone was not mutagenic or clastogenic in the in vitro bacterial assays for gene mutation, the in vitro chromosome aberration test in human lymphocytes, the in vivo mouse micronucleus test, and the in vivo in vitro rat UDS assay. There was a small (about 2-fold) increase in mutation in the in vitro mouse lymphoma assay in the presence of metabolic activation.

Impairment of Fertility: Rosiglitazone had no effects on mating or fertility of male rats given up to 40 mg/kg/day (approximately 116 times human AUC at the maximum recommended human daily dose). Rosiglitazone altered estrous cyclicity (2 mg/kg/day) and reduced fertility (40 mg/kg/day) of female rats in association with lower plasma levels of progesterone and estradiol (approximately 20 and 200 times human AUC at the maximum recommended human daily dose, respectively). No such effects were noted at 0.2 mg/kg/day (approximately 3 times human AUC at the maximum recommended human daily dose). In monkeys, rosiglitazone (0.6 and 4.6 mg/kg/day; approximately 3 and 15 times human AUC at the maximum recommended human daily dose, respectively) diminished the follicular phase rise in serum estradiol with consequential reduction in the luteinizing hormone surge, lower luteal phase progesterone levels, and amenorrhea. The mechanism for these effects appears to be direct inhibition of ovarian steroidogenesis.

Animal Toxicology

Heart weights were increased in mice (3 mg/kg/day), rats (5 mg/kg/day), and dogs (2 mg/kg/day) with rosiglitazone treatments (approximately 5, 22, and 2 times human AUC at the maximum recommended human daily dose, respectively). Morphometric measurement indicated that there was hypertrophy in cardiac ventricular tissues, which may be due to increased heart work as a result of plasma volume expansion.

Pregnancy

Pregnancy Category C

There was no effect on implantation or the embryo with rosiglitazone treatment during early pregnancy in rats, but treatment during mid-late gestation was associated with fetal death and growth retardation in both rats and rabbits. Teratogenicity was not observed at doses up to 3 mg/kg in rats and 100 mg/kg in rabbits (approximately 20 and 75 times human AUC at the maximum recommended human daily dose, respectively). Rosiglitazone caused placental pathology in rats (3 mg/kg/day). Treatment of rats during gestation through lactation reduced litter size, neonatal viability, and postnatal growth, with growth retardation reversible after puberty. For effects on the placenta, embryo/fetus, and offspring, the no-effect dose was 0.2 mg/kg/day in rats and 15 mg/kg/day in rabbits. These no-effect levels are approximately 4 times human AUC at the maximum recommended human daily dose.

There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Avandia (rosiglitazone maleate) should not be used during pregnancy unless the potential benefit justifies the potential risk to the fetus.

Because current information strongly suggests that abnormal blood glucose levels during pregnancy are associated with a higher incidence of congenital anomalies as well as increased neonatal morbidity and mortality, most experts recommend that insulin be used during pregnancy to maintain blood glucose levels as close to normal as possible.

Labor and Delivery

The effect of rosiglitazone on labor and delivery in humans is not known.

Nursing Mothers

Drug related material was detected in milk from lactating rats. It is not known whether Avandia is excreted in human milk. Because many drugs are excreted in human milk, Avandia should not be administered to a nursing woman.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

In clinical trials, approximately 4600 patients with type 2 diabetes have been treated with Avandia; 3300 patients were treated for 6 months or longer and 2000 patients were treated for 12 months or longer.

The incidence and types of adverse events reported in clinical trials of Avandia as monotherapy are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Adverse Events (25% in Any Treatment Group) Reported by Patients in Double-blind Clinical Trials with Avandia as Monotherapy

	Avandia Monotherapy N = 2526	Placebo N = 601	Metformin Sulfonyleureas* N = 225	N = 626
Preferred Term	%	%	%	%
Upper respiratory tract infection	9.9	8.7	8.9	7.3
Injury	7.6	4.3	8.6	6.4
Headache	5.9	5.0	5.9	5.4
Back pain	4.0	3.8	4.0	5.0

Hyperglycemia	3.9	5.7	4.4	8.1
Fatigue	3.6	5.0	4.0	1.9
Sinusitis	3.2	4.5	5.3	3.0
Diarrhea	2.3	3.3	15.6	3.0
Hypoglycemia	0.6	0.2	1.3	5.9

*Includes patients receiving glyburide (N=514), gliziclade (N=91) or glipizide (N=21).

There were a small number of patients treated with Avandia who had adverse events of anemia and edema. Overall, these events were generally mild to moderate in severity and usually did not require discontinuation of treatment with Avandia.

In double-blind studies, anemia was reported in 1.9% of patients receiving Avandia compared to 0.7% on placebo, 0.6% on sulfonyleureas and 2.2% on metformin. Edema was reported in 4.8% of patients receiving Avandia compared to 1.3% on placebo, 1.0% on sulfonyleureas, and 2.2% on metformin. Overall, the types of adverse experiences reported when Avandia was used in combination with metformin were similar to those during monotherapy with Avandia. Reports of anemia (7.1 %) were greater in patients treated with a combination of Avandia and metformin compared to monotherapy with Avandia.

Lower pre-treatment hemoglobin/hematocrit levels in patients enrolled in the metformin combination clinical trials may have contributed to the higher reporting rate of anemia in these studies (See Laboratory Abnormalities, Hematology).

Laboratory Abnormalities

Hematologic: Decreases in mean hemoglobin and hematocrit occurred in a dose-related fashion in patients treated with Avandia (mean decreases in individual studies up to 1.0 gram/dL hemoglobin and up to 3.3% hematocrit). The time course and magnitude of decreases were similar in patients treated with a combination of Avandia and metformin or monotherapy. Pre-treatment levels of hemoglobin and hematocrit were lower in patients in metformin combination studies and may have contributed to the higher reporting rate of anemia.

White blood cell counts also decreased slightly in patients treated with Avandia. Decreases in hematologic parameters may be related to increased plasma volume observed with treatment with Avandia.

Lipids: Changes in serum lipids have been observed following treatment with Avandia (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY, Pharmacodynamics and Clinical Effects).

Serum Transaminase Levels: In clinical studies in 4598 patients treated with Avandia (rosiglitazone maleate) encompassing approximately 3600 patient years of exposure, there was no evidence of drug-induced hepatotoxicity or elevated ALT levels.

In controlled trials, 0.2% of patients treated with Avandia had reversible elevations in ALT >3X the upper limit of normal compared to 0.2% on placebo and 0.5% on active comparators. Hyperbilirubinemia was found in 0.3% of patients treated with Avandia compared with 0.9% treated with placebo and 1% in patients treated with active comparators.

In the clinical program including long-term, open-label experience, the rate per 100 patient years exposure of ALT increase to >3X the upper limit of normal was 0.35 for patients treated with Avandia, 0.59 for placebo-treated patients, and 0.78 for patients treated with active comparator agents.

In pre-approval clinical trials, there were no cases of idiosyncratic drug reactions leading to hepatic failure (See PRECAUTIONS, Hepatic Effects).

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

The management of antidiabetic therapy should be individualized.

Monotherapy

The usual starting dose of Avandia is 4 mg administered either as a single dose once daily or in divided doses twice daily. For patients who respond inadequately following 12 weeks of treatment as determined by reduction in FPG, the dose may be increased to 8 mg administered as a single dose once daily or in divided doses twice daily. Reductions in glycemic parameters by dose and regimen are described under CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY, Clinical Efficacy.

In clinical trials, the 4 mg twice daily regimen resulted in the greatest reduction in FPG and HbA1c.

Combination Therapy with Metformin

The usual starting dose of Avandia in combination with metformin is 4 mg administered as either a single dose once daily or in divided doses twice daily. The dose of Avandia may be increased to 8 mg/day following 12 weeks of therapy if there is insufficient reduction in FPG. Avandia may be administered as a single daily dose in the morning, or divided and administered in the morning and evening.

Avandia may be taken with or without food.

No dosage adjustments are required for the elderly.

No dosage adjustment is necessary when Avandia is used as monotherapy in patients with renal impairment. Since metformin is contraindicated in such patients, concomitant administration of metformin and Avandia is also contraindicated in patients with renal impairment.

Therapy with Avandia should not be initiated if the patient exhibits clinical evidence of active liver disease or increased serum transaminase levels (ALT >2.5X upper limit of normal at start of therapy (See PRECAUTIONS, Hepatic Effects and CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY, Hepatic Impairment). Liver enzyme monitoring is recommended in all patients prior to initiation of therapy with Avandia and periodically thereafter (See PRECAUTIONS, Hepatic Effects). There are no data on the use of Avandia in patients under 18 years of age; therefore, use of Avandia in pediatric patients is not recommended.

OVERDOSAGE

Limited data are available with regard to overdosage in humans. In clinical studies in volunteers, Avandia (rosiglitazone maleate) has been administered at single oral doses of up to 20 mg and was well-tolerated. In the event of an overdose, appropriate supportive treatment should be initiated as dictated by the patient's clinical status.

HOW SUPPLIED

Tablets: Each pentagonal film-coated Tiitab tablet contains rosiglitazone as the maleate as follows: 2 mg-pink, debossed with SB on one side and 2 on the other; 4 mg-orange, debossed with SB on one side and 4 on the other; 8 mg-red-brown, debossed with SB on one side and 8 on the other.

2 mg bottles of 30: NDC 0029-3158-13
2 mg bottles of 60: NDC 0029-3158-18
2 mg bottles of 100: NDC 0029-3158-20
2 mg bottles of 500: NDC 0029-3158-25
2 mg SUP 100s: NDC 0029-3158-21

4 mg bottles of 30: NDC 0029-3159-13
4 mg bottles of 60: NDC 0029-3159-18
4 mg bottles of 100: NDC 0029-3159-20
4 mg bottles of 500: NDC 0029-3159-25
4 mg SUP 100s: NDC 0029-3159-21

8 mg bottles of 30: NDC 0029-3160-13
8 mg bottles of 60: NDC 0029-3160-20
8 mg bottles of 500: NDC 0029-3160-25
8 mg SUP 100s: NDC 0029-3160-21

STORAGE

Store at 25°C (77°F); excursions 15°-30°C (59°-86°F). Dispense in a tight, light-resistant container.

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Estudios Originales:

Clostridial Sepsis: is Death Avoidable?

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Abstract: Massive intravascular hemolysis is a rare yet often fatal complication of clostridial sepsis. The only chance for survival is an early diagnosis and prompt initiation of treatment. We report a rapidly fatal case who developed electrocardiographic changes of acute myocardial injury.

Autopsy showed gas-filled bubbles and cysts in the myocardium partially filled with sporulating bacilli with the morphology of clostridia. Gas filled bubbles were also present in the lungs, liver, kidneys and spleen. The gastric mucosa showed hemorrhagic and necrotizing changes, the probable site of entry of the infection.

Clostridium perfringens causes over 90% of cases of clostridial septicemia. A rapid downhill course characterized by high fever, tachypnea, abdominal tenderness, intravascular hemolysis, shock and death within 24 hours of the onset of symptoms is the rule. A proper assessment of the significance of the hemolysis in context with rapidly changing physical findings should lead to an immediate identification of clostridia in the peripheral buffy coat. Penicillin in doses of 3 million units every 3 hours is the drug of choice. The use of alpha antitoxin is controversial. Hyperbaric oxygen, although theoretically useful, generally is an unrealistic alternative.

Introduction

Massive intravascular hemolysis is a rare and usually fatal complication of clostridial sepsis. The only chance for survival is an early diagnosis and prompt initiation of treatment. We report a rapidly fatal case with electrocardiographic changes suggestive of diffuse subepicardial injury. At postmortem massive gas gangrene of myocardium, liver, kidney and lungs was demonstrated.

Case Report

A 61-year-old woman with arterial hypertension and chronic gastritis for the last ten years presented to the emergency department complaining of back

pain which radiated to the legs. Except for nifedipine 80mg and ranitidine 150mg twice daily she took no medications. Two hours after her arrival she developed severe lower abdominal pain and immediately was consulted to the Internal Medicine Service. She had sought treatment at the emergency room twice during the previous two weeks for severe epigastric discomfort which responded partially to antacids and H₂-receptor antagonist.

She had three previous admissions to the hospital in the last four years due to chest discomfort and uncontrolled hypertension, but no electrocardiographic or enzymatic evidence of myocardial infarction could be obtained. Although there was recurrent epigastric discomfort for the previous ten years she had had no gastrointestinal bleeding. She had smoked one pack of cigarettes daily for the last 16 years, but drank no alcohol. A chest film taken five years previously showed a cardiothoracic ratio of 14 over 27.6 cm. A transthoracic echocardiogram performed one year previously showed a left ventricular ejection fraction of 40% and slight mitral valve regurgitation.

On admission the temperature was 37°C, the pulse was 107 and the respirations were 28. The blood pressure was 160/70 mm Hg. She was alert, oriented, grossly icteric, and complained loudly of abdominal pain. The lungs were well ventilated and clear. There was a regular cardiac rhythm, a systolic murmur II/VI was heard best at the apex. There were no gallops or jugular venous distention at 45 degrees of elevation. The abdomen was distended; bowel sounds were absent and there was marked generalized guarding. Rectal examination showed no melena or red blood. The extremities were without edema or cyanosis.

The hemoglobin level was 6.7 g/dl, hematocrit 8.4%, the leukocyte count was 12,700/cu.mm, with 57% segmented neutrophils, 19% lymphocytes, 12% monocytes and 12% band forms. There were 6% nucleated red blood cells and platelet count was

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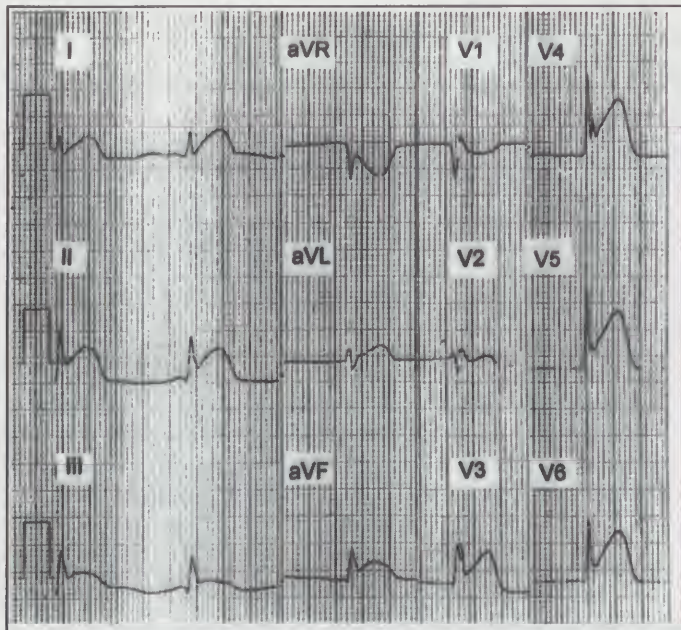


Figure 1. Electrocardiogram following reanimation showing a junctional escape rhythm with marked S-T segment elevation in leads II, III, aVF and in precordial leads V2 to V6 suggestive of acute myocardial injury. (Admission electrocardiogram obtained 2 hours and thirty minutes earlier was without abnormalities)

177,000/cu.mm. Serum chemistries could not be analyzed due to severe hemolysis. A plain film of the abdomen showed distended loops of bowel. The initial electrocardiogram showed sinus tachycardia without significant ST-T changes.

An abdominal computerized tomography shortly after admission confirmed bowel distention but gave no additional information. At the end of the tomogram the patient developed cardiorespiratory arrest. She was reanimated and started on mechanical ventilation. The electrocardiogram showed a junctional escape rhythm with ST segment elevation in leads II, III, aVF and in precordial leads V2 to V6 suggestive of acute

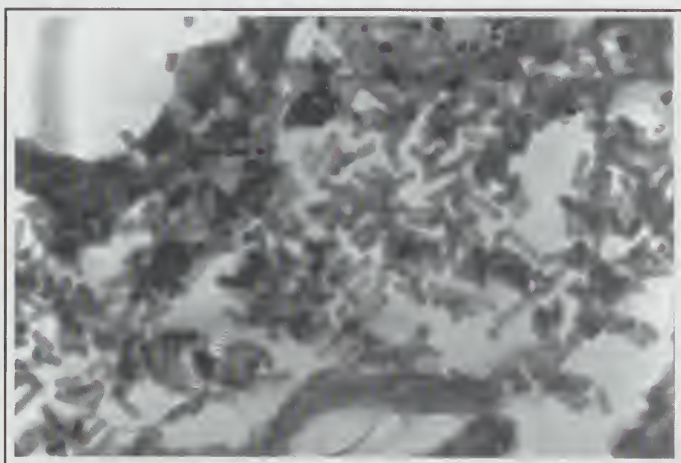


Figure 2. Tissue section of myocardium showing fragmentation of myocardial fibers and interstitial edema with massive infiltration of bacilli in the absence of an inflammatory response (Hematoxylin and Eosin, X100).

myocardial injury (Fig. 1). Ten minutes later her heart stopped and she could not be reanimated. Her total hospital stay was 3 hours.

Photomicrographs of heart muscle showed clusters of sporulating bacilli, probably clostridium species and interstitial edema separating the myocardial fibers (Fig. 2). The coronary arteries were patent. Lungs, liver, spleen and kidneys also showed parenchymal gas-bubbles (Fig. 3). The gastric mucosa showed hemorrhagic and necrotizing changes. The rest of the gastrointestinal tract showed areas of localized congestion containing clostridial-like bacillary forms, but no hemorrhage or necrosis. No pathological findings or evidence of bacilli were obtained from skin, gallbladder and genitourinary tract.

Discussion

Clostridial septicemia is a rare but highly fatal illness. A rapid downhill course characterized by high fever, tachypnea, abdominal pain, intravascular hemolysis, shock and death is found in 70%-100% of patients (2, 3). Half of the deaths occur less than 12

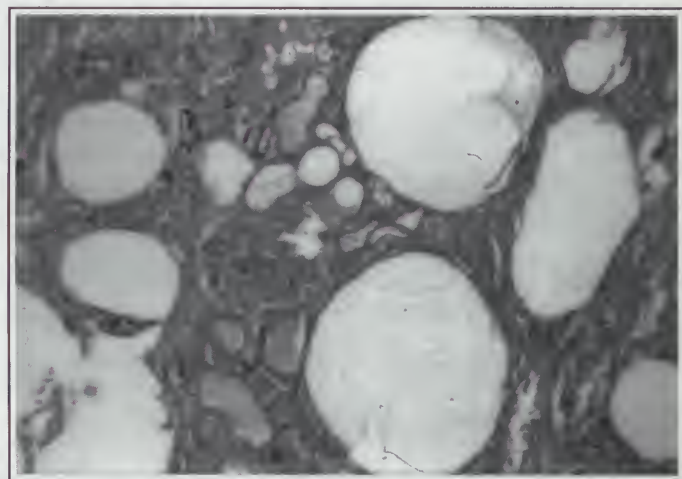


Figure 3. Tissue section of kidney showing parenchymal gas-bubbles (Hematoxylin and Eosin, X40).

hours after onset of symptoms and most of them occur within 24 hours (2, 4). *Clostridium perfringens* causes over 90% of the cases of Clostridial septicemia. *Clostridium septicum* is more common in immunocompromised patients (2). Usually the clostridia originate in the uterus, colon or biliary tract (1, 2). Clostridia may also disseminate from ulcerating or necrotic foci in the gastrointestinal tract, as it was probably the case here (2, 7).

Clostridium perfringens produces several exotoxins. The alpha toxin, lecithinase C is responsible for hemolysis and tissue necrosis. In experimental animals it causes disruption of the sarcolemma, myofilaments, sarcoplasmic reticulum, mitochondria and the plasma membrane of muscle tissue (1). Lecithinase C also

hydrolases sphingomyelin in cell membranes causing lysis of red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets and endothelial cells (2, 5). Another exotoxin, neuraminidase, digest neuraminic acid ligands in the surface of erythrocytes, thus promoting antigen-antibody interaction and cell lysis (2, 5).

The infectious diseases that can cause massive intravascular hemolysis are few: Malaria, Bartonellosis, Babesiosis and the Adult Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (6). All of them are extremely rare in Puerto Rico, although in the North American Continent Babesiosis and Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome has been well described and characterized. It is important therefore to think about clostridial septicemia when one faces the involved multiple organ systems associated with severe hemolytic syndrome (2). Protozoal infections such as Malaria and Babesiosis are best diagnosed in a peripheral smear, but clostridia are best identified in smears of the buffy coat.

The hemolytic anemia may drive the hematocrit as low as 10% (2, 7). Platelet counts may be moderately or severely reduced (2). Disseminate intravascular coagulation may also develop (2, 7). The plasma is pink to port wine in color. Microspherocytes and deformed erythrocytes on peripheral smears are the rule. (2, 8) White-blood-cell counts between 15,000 to 50,000 cu.mm are common.

The proper assessment of the significance of the hemolysis in context with rapidly changing physical findings should lead to a search and a proper identification of clostridia in peripheral buffy coat. Aqueous Penicillin in doses of 3 millions units intravenously every 3 hours is the drug of choice. Amino glycosides are ineffective (2). The use of Alpha Antitoxin is controversial (2, 8). Hyperbaric oxygen, although theoretically useful, generally is an unrealistic alternative (8).

Resumen: Hemólisis masiva intravascular es una complicación rara y frecuentemente fatal de septicemia por clostridia. La única oportunidad de sobrevivirla es un diagnóstico temprano y un comienzo precoz del tratamiento. Informamos sobre un paciente que murió con cambios electrocardiográficos de daño agudo al miocardio pocas horas después de ser admitido.

La autopsia reveló burbujas de gas y quistes en el miocardio parcialmente llenos de bacilos con la morfología de clostridia. También se encontraron burbujas de gas

similares encontradas en pulmones, hígado, riñones y bazo. La mucosa gástrica tenía cambios hemorrágicos y necrotizantes, el probable portal de entrada de la infección.

Clostridium perfringens causa sobre 90 por ciento de los casos de septicemia por clostridia. La evolución clínica se caracteriza por fiebre alta, taquipnea, dolor abdominal, hemólisis intravascular, shock y un deterioro rápido que lleva a la muerte en menos de 24 horas. Una evaluación correcta del significado de la hemólisis en el contexto de hallazgos físicos rápidamente cambiantes podrían llevar a la identificación inmediata de clostridia en un extendido periferal del anteocho de suero. La droga de elección es la penicilina en dosis de 3 millones de unidades cada 3 horas. El uso de antitoxina es controversial, oxígeno hiperbárico, aunque teóricamente útil, es generalmente una alternativa irreal.

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Estudios Originales:

Repercusiones psicológicas a largo plazo del abuso sexual en la niñez:

Un estudio piloto en Puerto Rico

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Resumen: El presente estudio tiene como objetivo conocer las consecuencias psicológicas a largo plazo del abuso sexual en la niñez. La muestra estuvo compuesta por 45 adultos con experiencia de abuso sexual en la niñez de los cuales el 82.2% eran del género femenino y el 17.8% del género masculino. Del estudio se desprende que todos los participantes mostraron algún tipo de dificultad en algunas de las áreas estudiadas. El 80% mostró dificultad en el aspecto cognitivo, 66.7% en el área física-somática, un 88.9% en el área emocional y un 84.4% en el área interpersonal. Sobresale también que un 55.6% mostró tener dificultades en el área conductual.

Introducción

El abuso sexual, al igual que otras formas de maltrato dejan una huella imborrable en las víctimas de este acto. La persona sobreviviente de abuso sexual sufre, en muchas ocasiones, consecuencias psicológicas que impactan negativamente su vida, forzándolo a realizar cambios para lograr así una adaptación a las demandas de su medio ambiente. Estos cambios pueden ser adaptativos o maladaptativos, depende de cómo el individuo procese y trabaje la experiencia victimizante. Estos ajustes ante las demandas del medio ambiente, que se producen como estrategias necesarias para sobrevivir, nos retan a buscar un entendimiento más amplio de las repercusiones a largo plazo del abuso sexual. El tratamiento dirigido a la víctima abusada sexualmente no necesariamente se limita a la intervención inmediata luego del descubrimiento del abuso sexual en una etapa de desarrollo en específico, sino que, cada etapa de desarrollo puede presentar una crisis que conllevaría intervención psicoterapéutica y en muchos casos multidisciplinaria.

Una mirada a las consecuencias psicológicas del abuso sexual en la niñez

El impacto del abuso sexual ha sido ampliamente

documentado, conociendo que este puede causar disfunciones de salud mental. Sgroi (1) menciona diez problemas en la niñez que son el resultado del impacto de ser victimizado. El síndrome de estar dañado, culpabilidad, miedos, depresión y destrezas sociales pobres, coraje reprimido, hostilidad, inhabilidad para confiar, confusión de roles y seudomadurez son algunas de las consecuencias del abuso sexual. Se conoce también que los/las niños/as que han sido abusados sexualmente presentan dificultades en su autoestima, retraimiento social y ansiedad (2). Pueden presentar además, hiperactividad, agresividad, falta de control, pasividad y conductas inapropiadas (3). Esta lista de conductas las puede presentar un/a niño/a maltratado, también es común en los/las menores abusados/as. Las conductas en el/la niño/a pueden manifestarse en los extremos, por ejemplo, ser hiperactivos o completamente pasivos (3).

Una mirada a las consecuencias del abuso sexual en la etapa de la adolescencia

El adolescente abusado sexualmente puede presentar dificultades clínicas como disociación, daño severo en la autoestima, coraje, un yo fragmentado y dificultad para entender sus sentimientos (4). Pueden manifestar además, problemas con el alcohol, drogas, controles, anorexia nervosa y automutilación. Frecuentemente los adolescentes abusados son etiquetados como que padecen de un trastorno oposicional desafiante, trastorno conductual o un trastorno de déficit de atención con o sin hiperactividad (4).

McClellan (5) realizó un estudio para conocer las variables clínicas que caracterizaban los adolescentes sobrevivientes de abuso sexual y encontró que los adolescentes presentaban manifestaciones clínicas tales como conductas sexuales inapropiadas, depresión, trastorno de estrés postraumático, síntomas de trastorno de personalidad fronterizo, problemas familiares y dificultades sociales.

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Consecuencias del abuso sexual en la etapa de la adultez: la mujer sobreviviente

Kirschner, Kirschner y Rappaport (6) señalan que el abuso sexual es un estresor traumático que tiene un alto potencial de establecer consecuencias a largo plazo. Los síntomas que presentan las/los adultas/os sobrevivientes, de acuerdo a estos autores se clasifican en cuatro categorías: cognitiva, conductual, emocional, física/somática e interpersonal. Se estima que aproximadamente el 40% de todas las víctimas sobrevivientes sufrirán efectos posteriores serios y podrían beneficiarse de un proceso psicoterapéutico en la adultez (7).

Los problemas cognitivos incluyen baja estima, autoreferencias negativas, sentimientos de culpa; piensan que nadie los quiere, problemas de atención-concentración, vacíos en la memoria, amnesia de eventos en la niñez y trastornos disociativos. Los desórdenes en el área emocional son la ansiedad y la depresión. Esto se puede reflejar en pesadillas, terrores nocturnos, insomnio, miedo a dormir solo, miedo al abandono, automutilación, desesperanza y fantasías acerca de cometer suicidio. En el área físico-somática, el adulto sobreviviente puede presentar dificultades como problemas gastrointestinales, tensión crónica, migrañas, insomnio, dolor vaginal, trastornos alimentarios, abuso de drogas y/o alcohol. Los problemas en el área conductual incluyen conductas autodestructivas e inapropiadas en el hogar.

Consecuencias en el hombre sobreviviente de abuso sexual

El impacto en los varones abusados sexualmente generalmente tiene repercusiones múltiples y complejas, que afectan el yo-físico, mental, emocional y espiritual (8). Crowder (8) señala los efectos típicos que puede presentar el hombre abusado se relacionan al impacto físico, mental, emocional, trastorno de estrés postraumático, disociación, dificultades con la identidad del género masculino, confusión en la orientación sexual, homofobia, agresión, abuso reactivo, compulsiones sexuales, adicciones y dificultades interpersonales (8).

El impacto físico se refiere a disturbios en el sueño, automutilación, prácticas autoabusivas como adicción a drogas, alcohol y prácticas sexuales no seguras. El impacto mental más frecuente en los sobrevivientes son las distorsiones cognitivas, memorias reprimidas o negación del impacto de la experiencia. Pueden presentar además desesperanza aprendida, pasividad y baja autoestima. El impacto emocional es uno de los aspectos afectados ya que se tiene una relación directa con las creencias culturales que hablan sobre la exposición de la emoción del hombre enseñando que los varones en su proceso de socialización no deben expresar su afecto abiertamente. Es entonces, que muchos sobrevivientes desarrollan adicción a sustan-

cias como alcohol, drogas o comida que consumen para canalizar su energía mental y/o emocional. Otros sobrevivientes desarrollan adicciones al trabajo, deportes, sexo u otros patrones adictivos u obsesivos (8).

El hombre sobreviviente de abuso sexual puede desarrollar además un trastorno de estrés postraumático, disociación o un trastorno de personalidad múltiple. Puede además tener dificultades con la identidad del género masculino donde éstos se sienten dañados en la esencia de ser hombres o de su masculinidad. (8). Esto puede resultar en un aislamiento, ya que prevalecen dudas tales como ¿soy un ofensor, soy homosexual? (8). Por último, los hombres sobrevivientes responden de forma inconsciente a experiencias de revictimización sexual. Estas experiencias victimizantes pueden ser por un estado de ego pasivo o relaciones interpersonales abusivas.

El presente estudio pretende conocer aquellas variables clínicas que caracterizan a adultos sobrevivientes de abuso sexual que buscan ayuda psicológica y/o psiquiátrica. El propósito del mismo es identificar estas variables de forma tal que el profesional de salud mental pueda estar preparado para trabajar con dicha sintomatología.

Método

Participantes

La muestra de este estudio consistió de 45 personas que se han identificado como que han sido abusados sexualmente en la niñez, de diferentes clínicas de salud mental en la región metropolitana de Puerto Rico. La muestra estuvo constituida por hombres y mujeres de 18 años en adelante. El método de selección fue por disponibilidad.

Procedimientos para obtener el consentimiento

Para obtener el consentimiento de los participantes se utilizó de referencia y como guía los requisitos éticos establecidos por la American Psychological Association (1992). Inicialmente se solicitó permiso al Centro de Salud Mental, clínica privada y hospital para que autorizara realizar la investigación y el acercamiento a los psicólogos. Luego de obtenidos los permisos se procedió a realizar el acercamiento al terapeuta y, más adelante, con la autorización de éste, al cliente, con el cual se acordaría una reunión. Dicha reunión, realizada por la investigadora o el psicólogo a cargo del caso no interfirió con el proceso terapéutico ni con el funcionamiento de la clínica o consultorio privado.

Instrumentos

Los instrumentos utilizados en este estudio consistieron de una planilla de datos sociodemográficos y un cuestionario de variables clínicas contruidos para esta investigación. Estos fueron completados por el psicólogo o psiquiatra a cargo del caso. Además se

utilizaron el Inventario de ansiedad de Beck y la escala de depresión de Beck-II los cuales fueron completados por el participante. El uso de los instrumentos BAI y BDI-II es utilizado con autorización de la casa publicadora y se encuentran validados para la población puertorriqueña.

Resultados

La muestra del estudio estuvo compuesta por un total de 45 personas, de los cuales el 82.2% (37) eran del género femenino mientras que el 17.8% (8) eran del masculino. La media de edad para esta población era de 33 años y las edades fluctuaban entre 18 hasta 59 años. Con relación a su estado civil la muestra estuvo compuesta por un 35% solteros, 35% casados, 17.8% divorciados y 11.1% con una relación consensual. El estado económico de los participantes también fue variado. El 35.6% indicaron una ganancia mensual de menos de \$500.00, mientras que el 24.4% ganaban aproximadamente de \$501 hasta 1,000 dólares mensuales. El 26.7% devengaban de 1,001 hasta \$2,000 mientras que sólo el 13.3% devenga del \$2,001 en adelante.

El grado académico de los participantes fue otra variable estudiada. La mayoría de los participantes (37.8%) había obtenido un bachillerato, seguido de un 26.7% que obtuvo un grado asociado. El 15.6% curso de décimo a cuarto año, el 6.7% de séptimo a noveno y el 6.7% curso de 1 hasta 3 años de universidad. Sólo el 4.4% cursa una educación post-graduada y un 2.2% no especificó en el cuestionario.

En términos de las creencias religiosas de los participantes se mostró que la mayoría de éstos son católicos (64.4%), seguido por un 22.2% que creen en el protestantismo. En esta misma línea se identificó que el 2.2% se identificaron como espiritistas, el 4.4% como Testigos de Jehova, el 4.4% como agnósticos y el 4.4% restante identificaron que creían en otra religión no especificada en el cuestionario.

Otra pregunta realizada en el cuestionario se dirigía con quién residía el participante al momento de la investigación. En este aspecto, el 22.2% identificaron que residían con su pareja, el 17.8% con su pareja e hijos y el 15.6% con sus hijos. Otro 15.6% de los participantes identificaron que residían con ambos padres, 8.9% solos, 2.2% sólo con su madre, 2.2% sólo con su papá, 2.2% con su madre y padrastro y 2.2% en un hogar de rehabilitación.

Se pretendió conocer además, las características psicológicas que presentaban los adultos sexualmente abusados que buscaban terapia. A esto se le denominó perfil de una muestra abusada sexualmente en la niñez. Las variables estudiadas para este perfil se relacionan al aspecto cognitivo, conductual, somático/físico y relaciones interpersonales.

En los hallazgos sobresale que en el aspecto cognoscitivo la mayoría de los participantes mostró tener problemas de autoconcepto (97.8%), autoreferencias negativas (80.0%) y sentimientos de culpa (95.6%). Sobresalen también dificultades relacionadas a diferentes miedos irracionales (66.7%) y presentar clínicamente las características de las personas diagnosticadas con el trastorno de estrés postraumático (57.8%). Éstos mostraron, además, no tener dificultades en el aspecto aprendizaje (88.9%), en recordar los eventos de la niñez (64.4%), en confusión de roles (68.9%), en presentar desórdenes disociativos (84.4%) o características del trastorno fronterizo (88.9%) (véase tabla 1).

Tabla 1

Características psicológicas en el aspecto cognitivo

Variable	Presente	Ausente
Problemas de autoconcepto	44 (97.8%)	1 (2.2%)
Autoreferencias negativas	36 (80.0%)	9 (20.0%)
Sentimientos de culpa	43 (95.6%)	2 (4.4%)
Dificultades en el aprendizaje	5 (11.1%)	40 (88.9%)
Amnesia de los eventos de la niñez	16 (35.6%)	29 (64.4%)
Desórdenes disociativos	7 (15.6%)	38 (84.4%)
Miedos irracionales	30 (66.7%)	15 (33.3%)
Confusión de roles	14 (31.1%)	31 (68.9%)
Trastorno de estrés postraumático	26 (57.8%)	19 (42.2%)
Trastorno fronterizo	5 (11.1%)	40 (88.9%)

Las características sobresalientes en el área físico-somática indican que éstos pueden presentar problemas gastrointestinales (51.1%), tensión crónica (66.7%), problemas con el patrón de sueño (insomnio) (62.2%) y migrañas (51.1%). No obstante, la muestra no presentaba los síntomas de dolor vaginal (77.8%, en las mujeres), náuseas (75.6%), problemas sexuales (51.1%), desórdenes alimentarios (60%), y/o abuso de alcohol o droga (80.0%) (véase tabla 2).

Tabla 2

Características en el área físico-somática

Variable	Presente	Ausente o no aplica
Problemas gastrointestinales	23 (51.1%)	22 (48.9%)
Tensión crónica	30 (66.7%)	15 (33.3%)
Migrañas	23 (51.1%)	22 (48.9%)
Dolor vaginal	10 (22.2%)	35 (77.8%)
Náusea	11 (24.4%)	34 (75.6%)
Desórdenes alimentarios	18 (40.0%)	27 (60.0%)
Problemas sexuales	22 (48.9%)	23 (51.1%)
Insomnio	28 (62.2%)	17 (37.8%)
Abuso de droga y/o alcohol (historial o actualidad)	9 (20.0%)	36 (80.0%)

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Por otro lado, en las características en el área emocional sobresale que la mayoría de los participantes mostró tener problemas de afecto (82.2%), con la ansiedad (75.6%), depresión (88.9%) y desesperanza (64.4%). No mostró tener problemas en el área de adicción (73.3%) y/o dificultades con la orientación sexual (84.4%) (véase tabla 3).

Tabla 3		
Características en el área emocional		
Variable	Presente	Ausente
Problemas de afecto	37 (82.2%)	8 (17.8%)
Problemas con la ansiedad	34 (75.6%)	11 (24.4%)
Depresión	40 (88.9%)	5 (11.1%)
Algún tipo de adicción (droga, alcohol, trabajo, sexo, deporte)	12 (26.7%)	33 (73.3%)
Dificultades con la orientación sexual	7 (15.6%)	38 (84.4%)
Desesperanza	29 (64.4%)	16 (35.6%)

En el área conductual los participantes mostraron dificultades en el área de realizar conductas inapropiadas en el hogar (55.6%). No obstante, no mostraron tener dificultades realizando conductas autodestructivas (93.3%) ni dificultades conductuales en el proceso académico si estudiaban (80.0%) (véase tabla 4).

Tabla 4		
Características en el área interpersonal		
Variable clínica	Presente	Ausente
Problemas con las relaciones íntimas	31 (68.9%)	14 (31.1%)
Problemas familiares	38 (84.4%)	7 (15.6%)
Pobres destrezas sociales e interpersonales	27 (60.0%)	18 (40.0%)
Revictimización	31 (68.9%)	14 (31.1%)
Agresiva(o)	20 (44.4%)	25 (55.6%)
Sumiso(a)	22 (48.9%)	23 (51.1%)
Problemas en su desempeño de padres	20 (44.4%)	25 (55.6%)

En el aspecto interpersonal los participantes mostraron que presentaban dificultades en iniciar o mantener relaciones íntimas (68.9%), problemas familiares (84.4%) y mantenían relaciones donde eran revictimizados (68.4%). Se demuestra también una carencia en las destrezas interpersonales (60.0%). No obstante, sobresale que no presentan problemas en su desempeño en el rol de padres (55.6%), en un estilo de personalidad agresivo (55.6%) ni en uno sumiso (51.1%) (véase tabla 5).

Tabla 5		
Características en el área conductual		
Variable	Presente	Ausente
Conductas autodestructivas	3 (6.7%)	42 (93.3%)
Dificultades conductuales en la escuela (si estudia)	3 (6.7%)	42 (93.3%)
Conductas inapropiadas en el hogar	25 (55.6%)	20 (44.4%)

Otro de los aspectos estudiados era si el cliente tomaba algún medicamento al momento del estudio. Los resultados indican que sólo 17 de los 45 participantes tomaban medicamentos. Los medicamentos son: zoloft, prozac, paxil, para hipertensión, epilepsia; welbutrin, xanax, eskarilh, catapres y buspar. El medicamento prozac, zoloft, paxil y el welbutrin son frecuentemente utilizados como antidepresivos. El buspar, xanax y el catapres (clonidine) son medicamentos utilizados como anti-ansiolítico. El clonidine es utilizado además para controlar la agitación, ansiedad y en personas ADD (9). El eskarilh (litium) es un estabilizador del estado del ánimo frecuentemente utilizado como un agente antimánico y anti-depresivo (9) (véase tabla 6).

Tabla 6	
Medicamentos al momento del estudio	
Variable	Frecuencia y por ciento que toma este medicamento
No toma medicamento	29 (64.4%)
Eskarilh y Catapres	1 (2.2%)
Buspar	1 (2.2%)
Prozac	7 (15.6%)
Medicamentos para migraña	1 (2.2%)
Zoloft	1 (2.2%)
Paxil	3 (6.7%)
Medicamentos para epilepsia	1 (2.2%)
Welbutrin y Xanax	1 (2.2%)

Por otro lado, se le ofreció a los terapeutas un reactivo que preguntaba si existía alguna otra sintomatología en los sobrevivientes de abuso sexual que no se incluyera en el cuestionario de variables clínicas. Los terapeutas indicaron que sus clientes presentaban la siguiente sintomatología: rasgos dependientes (6.7%), problemas de pareja (2.2%), control de impulsos (2.2%), no soporta que la toquen (2.2%), obsesiva compulsiva (4.4%) y bipolar (4.4%). Presentaban además problemas alimentarios (2.2%), trastorno fronterizo (4.4%) y trastornos disociativo (2.2%).

Con relación a las variables relacionadas con el abuso se encuentra quién fue el primer ofensor, segundo o tercer ofensor, a qué edad comenzó el abuso, cuando terminó y cuanto duró el abuso los participantes indicaron lo siguiente (Tabla 7):

Tabla 7	
Variables relacionadas al abuso	
Variable	Presente
Primer ofensor	
Padre	6 (13.3%)
Madre	2 (4.4%)
Tío	3 (6.7%)
Otro familiar	14 (31.1%)
Padrastra	6 (13.3%)
Madrastra	1 (2.2%)
Otro no familiar	13 (28.9%)
Edad al momento del abuso	
No recuerda	6 (13.3%)
edad preescolar	2 (4.4%)
4 años	2 (4.4%)
5 años	8 (17.8%)
6 años	2 (4.4%)
7 años	6 (13.3%)
8 años	6 (13.3%)
9 años	2 (4.4%)
Tipo de abuso	
Violación	6 (13.3%)
Actos lascivos	18 (40.0%)
Incesto	4 (8.9%)
Incesto y actos lascivos	2 (4.4%)
Sodomía y actos lascivos	6 (13.3%)
Observación a terceros e incesto	1 (2.2%)
Violación, incesto y actos lascivos	1 (2.2%)
Violación y actos lascivos	2 (4.4%)
Violación, incesto y sodomía	1 (2.2%)
Sodomía y observación	1 (2.2%)
Sodomía, incesto y actos lascivos	1 (2.2%)
Exhibicionismo y actos lascivos	1 (2.2%)
Incesto, observación. Sodomía y actos lascivos	1 (2.2%)

Otra variable considerada fue el tiempo y el tipo de tratamiento al que la persona asistía al momento de realizar la investigación. Los resultados fueron los siguientes (véase tabla 8):

Tabla 8	
Tiempo y tipo de Tratamiento	
Variable	Presente
Tratamiento	
Psicológico	29 (64.4%)
Psiquiátrico	1 (2.2%)
Ambos tratamientos	15 (33.3%)
Tiempo en tratamiento	
1-3 meses	20 (44.4%)
4-12 meses	14 (31.1%)
más de un año	11 (24.4%)

Se evaluaron los niveles de ansiedad de los participantes a través del BAI (10). En este aspecto sobresale que sólo cinco participantes presentaban un nivel mínimo de ansiedad. En la puntuación de 8-15 que representa una ansiedad leve se ubicaron un total de 10 pacientes. 14 participantes se ubicaron en el intervalo de 16-25 que indica un nivel de ansiedad moderada. Por último, la mayoría de los participantes, 16, mostraron estar en la categoría de 26-63 que refleja una ansiedad severa (véase tabla 9).

Tabla 9			
Niveles de ansiedad en los participantes según el BAI			
Puntuación a intervalo	Nivel de ansiedad	Frecuencia	Por ciento
0-7	Nivel mínimo de ansiedad	5	11.0%
8-15	Ansiedad leve	10	22.8%
16-25	Ansiedad moderada	14	31.2%
26-63	Ansiedad severa	16	35.0%

Se determinaron también los niveles de depresión de los participantes con el BDI-II (11). Los resultados indican que 8 de los 45 participantes presentaban un rango mínimo de depresión. Cuatro de los participantes mostraron una depresión leve. Además 15 presentaron tener una depresión moderada y 18 una depresión severa (Tabla 10).

Tabla 10			
Niveles de depresión en los participantes según el BDI-II			
Puntuación	Nivel de depresión	Frecuencia	Por ciento
0-9	Rango mínimo de depresión	8	18%
10-16	Depresión leve	4	9%
17-29	Depresión moderada	15	33%
30-63	Depresión severa	18	40%

Correlación entre la Escala de Depresión y el Inventario de Ansiedad de Beck-II

Se realizó una validez divergente entre el BAI y el BDI-II. Este estudio se realiza para conocer si las pruebas presentan alguna asociación o si, por el contrario, éstas no presentan similitudes en la sintomatología que miden. La correlación se realizó a través del Índice de Pearson que nos señala el grado de relación entre dos conjuntos de puntuaciones. Los resultados obtenidos indican una correlación positiva, fuerte y significativa ($r = .720$).

Discusión

Los sobrevivientes de abuso sexual, en la etapa de adultez pueden presentar diferentes dificultades en el área cognoscitiva, conductual, interpersonal, en el área físico-somática y emocional. Estas dificultades impactan la vida del sobreviviente donde continuamente pueden presentar crisis ante los desafíos del medio ambiente. Las mismas bien pueden estar relacionadas al manejo e intervención al momento del descubrimiento del secreto de ser víctima. El impacto del abuso varía y muchas veces está influenciados por unos mediadores que se relacionan a la edad del niño al momento del abuso, la cronicidad, la severidad, la relación con el perpetrador, los niveles de peligrosidad, el clima emocional de la familia previo al abuso, la salud mental y emocional del menor, el género de la víctima y las respuestas de los padres ante el proceso de divulgación del abuso (13).

Los participantes de este estudio (45) se caracterizaron porque la mayoría eran del género femenino (82.2%), con una proporción igual de casados (35.5%) y de solteras (35.5%). Aunque la recopilación de la muestra se realizó en tres centros de salud mental, los cuestionarios fueron repartidos en siete lugares por un período de 6 meses. No obstante, la obtención de la muestra sobreviviente de abuso sexual la consideramos difícil. Primero, por los pocos centros de ayuda especializados en el área. Segundo, el realizar una investigación con esta población implica el acercamiento a esta muestra y clínicamente no siempre es posible debido a la intensidad del tratamiento del trauma y su impacto en la actualidad. No obstante, y a pesar de las limitaciones con la muestra, se procedió a realizar los análisis estadísticos necesarios aunque se recalca las limitaciones de la muestra.

Con relación a las características clínicas que presentaban los participantes sobresale que la mayoría de éstos presentaban problemas en el área cognoscitiva, interpersonal y en el área físico-somática. La literatura señala que los sobrevivientes de abuso sexual pueden presentar dificultades en el autoconcepto, sentimientos de culpa y autoreferencias negativas. Estas dificultades en este área fueron confirmadas en este estudio ya que la mayoría de los participantes presentaba problemas en el autoconcepto, autoreferencias negativas, sentimientos de culpa, miedos irracionales y las características típicas del trastorno de estrés postraumático. Estas dificultades se pueden atribuir al Síndrome de estar dañado, que se desarrolla en la niñez y responde como una consecuencia del abuso. En este síndrome el sobreviviente piensa que porque ha sido abusado está "marcado" o dañado por el resto de su vida. Este síndrome puede afectar a la persona a tal magnitud que puede pensar que no es importante, no vale, se culpa por no haber detenido el abuso y recurre a una inseguridad que se pueden convertir en una ansiedad

severa a diferentes aspectos del medio ambiente. Como consecuencia de estas variables cognoscitivas, la persona puede desarrollar un trastorno del estado del ánimo o un trastorno de ansiedad, con las implicaciones a su salud mental que esto tiene.

En el área físico-somática los participantes del estudio presentaron diferentes dificultades. La mayoría de la muestra indicó presentar problemas gastrointestinales, tensión crónica, migrañas e insomnio. Estos hallazgos confirman la literatura cuando señala que los sobrevivientes pueden presentar dificultades en el área somática como una forma de manejar sus carencias en el manejo de problemas.

En el área emocional, los participantes indicaron que presentaban dificultades con el afecto, desesperanza, ansiedad y indicadores de depresión. Estos hallazgos validan la experiencia clínica y la literatura que argumenta que los sobrevivientes desarrollan problemas al expresar su afecto, presentan una visión de vida derrotista y manifiestan trastornos depresivos y de ansiedad (6, 8).

Al comparar los niveles de depresión y de ansiedad que presentan los participantes del estudio sobresale que la gran mayoría presenta algún nivel de ansiedad o de depresión. Al realizar una correlación entre ambos niveles a través de las pruebas administradas se confirman los hallazgos de Beck, Epstein y otros (14) que indican una asociación entre ansiedad y depresión. Esto, en parte, se debe a que tanto la depresión como la ansiedad pueden tener sintomatología similar tanto en el aspecto físico como en las cogniciones que presenta. Las similitudes y diferencias presentan unas implicaciones de tratamiento en términos de la diferenciación. Por lo que se debe conocer la etiología y las características de los síntomas que presenta el individuo. Además de los aspectos mencionados existe una peculiaridad con la población sobreviviente estudiada. Esta población puede presentar un traslapo entre estos dos trastornos debido a su experiencia victimizante. Es decir, pueden presentar síntomas de ansiedad y síntomas de depresión con la particularidad de no mostrar los criterios diagnósticos según descritos en el DSM-IV (15). Esta sintomatología producto de la "secuela del abuso" se caracteriza por una visión de vida desesperanzadora, sin motivos de emprender nuevas tareas, característico de la depresión. Además de una ansiedad constante, en espera de diferentes eventos que impacten su vida. Estas características descritas de manera limitada pueden resultar en que dicha población presente índices altos en escalas que midan depresión y ansiedad como se observó en este estudio. Aunque se pueda observar en momentos determinados que presentan los criterios diagnósticos, su sintomatología como secuela se ha incorporado como parte de su esquema mental de vida (estilo de vida).

Entre las limitaciones del estudio encontramos: 1) dificultades en el proceso de obtener una muestra más amplia, 2) los reactivos compuestos de preguntas abiertas en el cuestionario de variables clínicas no fueron completados por todos los terapeutas y 3) el cuestionario de variables clínicas se limita a una lista de síntomas que necesita ser ampliada en futuras investigaciones. Además se encontró, 4) que en el área de las características conductuales un 55% de los terapeutas indicaron que sus clientes presentaban conductas inapropiadas en el hogar. No obstante, el cuestionario no proveyó para indicar qué tipo de conductas inapropiadas en el hogar, por lo que los terapeutas no ampliaron dicha respuesta, y 5) en las variables socio-demográficas el 15.6% de los participantes indicaron que residían con "otros". Los terapeutas no especificaron a que "otros" se referían (tíos, amigos u otra persona de la familia extendida). En términos de recomendaciones sobresale que sería adecuado: 1) realizar un estudio de variables clínicas con una muestra más amplia para obtener un perfil de datos clínicos del sobreviviente abusado sexualmente que solicita servicios de salud mental y 2) realizar un estudio retrospectivo para analizar la sintomatología que presentaron las víctimas por las diferentes etapas de desarrollo.

Además, 3) realizar un estudio donde se evalúen los mediadores de abuso sexual y su efecto en el trauma a corto-largo plazo y 4) realizar investigaciones dirigidas a discriminar la sintomatología de ansiedad y la sintomatología característica de depresión. Se recomienda establecer esta diferencia especialmente en la población sobreviviente de abuso sexual. 5) Se recomienda además realizar un programa de intervención temprana para niños y niñas que han sido víctimas de abuso sexual. Sin lugar a dudas, mientras más temprano identifiquemos aquellos sujetos (menores, adolescentes o adultos) víctimas de abuso, mejor será la probabilidad de recuperación y manejo de secuelas patologizantes. Hacia esta meta debemos dirigirnos como profesionales: hacia la prevención e intervención efectiva.

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For Journal Watch:

William J Donnelly M.D.
The Language of Medical Case Histories
Ann Int Med 1997, 127:1045-1048 (The reviewer has an abiding interest on this topic and has placed his personal comments in parentheses.)

Case histories are important. They are not merely storage-and-retrieval devices. They shape as well as reflect the thought, talk and action of trainees and their teachers.

Medical records and oral presentations in teaching hospitals are frequently distorted by seven near-deadly sins:

1. Introducing the sick person as a biological specimen: "A 37-year-old gravida II para I black female heroin addict." (Would it not be more informative to present : A-37- year old woman para I extremely concerned with her second pregnancy because she was an intravenous heroin user during the first trimester.)
2. Translating the words of the patient into biomedical language: A 50 year old hispanic man admitted with recurrent "angina pectoris." (A description of a recurrent sharp pain at the left parasternal border which increases with respiration and the patient can touch would certainly lead to a different diagnosis.)
3. Using rhetorical devices that cast doubt on the history and suggest that physicians' or laboratory observations are infallible: The patient "says," "reports," "states," "claims," or "denies." Physicians "note," "observe" and "find." And an EKG or chest film "shows" or "reveals." (Are films and electrocardiograms omniscient, independent of human interpretation?)

This is all a sham. The whole text of a medical case history is problematic, from the way evidence is gathered, interpreted and arranged

to the "final" analysis of the autopsy "findings." A competent physician knows that the study of an ill patient is always uncertain, tentative, incomplete, subject to change.

4. Converting the patient's story of an illness into a biological dysfunction. (Reducing to insignificance, by exclusion, the patient's understanding of his illness, his existential fears and sufferings (1)).
5. In the progress notes stigmatizing the patient's testimony as subjective, (untrustworthy); while the quite fallible "findings" and "results" of physicians and laboratories are labeled as objective, (reliable). If we were to change subjective to a more neutral term—historical; and objective to the more accurate term—observations, the SOAP format would be improved by the (less "clean" but more caring) acronym, HOAP.
6. Pathologizing the patient's thoughts and feelings: poor understanding of a medical condition may be inappropriately called denial, or transitory and appropriate sadness depression. (Why not perceive and record correctly confusion, bewilderment and sorrow, assess its significance and take the proper action?)
7. Failing to elicit or to record as relevant the patient's perspective. (And this failure to elicit and record is not in trifles. It is in matters as important as: the patient's understanding of his illness and what he expects from the treatment; the patient's opinion as to the appropriateness for him of intensive care or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (2,3). Patients expect from their physicians something tailor-made: Not what is appropriate in general, not what is practiced in Boston, but what is suitable for his illness at this time and for his specific situation.)

These criticized practices persist because of two deeply held (and patently incorrect) beliefs:

- 1) Sickness is fundamentally a matter of disordered biology. (Not an existential encounter with a frightening unknown where disordered biology may or may not be present)

- 2) Physicians should adopt as much as possible the (cold, uncaring and detached) view and methods of a natural scientist in order to practice scientific medicine (not the professional tenets, perhaps useless in veterinary medicine, but required for the medical profession: altruism, duty, honor, respect for others).

Physicians need to work with patients as partners in order to attend adequately to their illnesses and their suffering. Patients' perspectives should be made part of progress notes and summaries. (Patients take the action they deem best for their well-being—or the welfare of their families—not simply on the “facts”, but on their perspective of what these facts mean to them. In order to effectively ensure the required participation of patients in their care, Patient's Perspectives should be added as a specific item before the Assessment to all medical histories. When the patients' perspectives are inappropriate, they should

be assessed as any other medical problem so that further evaluation and corrective action may be considered).

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